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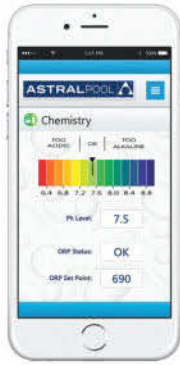
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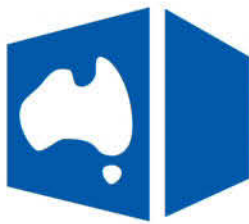
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From the editor

M

any people believe that it's during the day when our outdoor rooms and gardens give us the best value. After all, sipping a cool drink beneath the shade of an umbrella or a poolside cabana is the ultimate way to relax and unwind on a sunny day. But a well-designed outdoor living space will take you from day to night, extending the alfresco lifestyle hours you can enjoy. The key is a thoughtful, properly planned outdoor lighting scheme, but where to start? To help you paint

the perfect nightscape, we take a look at some common garden lighting techniques and some of the latest trends in lighting design.

Making the most of a small outdoor area is another challenge many of us face, but there are myriad tried and tested tricks of the trade you can employ to maximise whatever space you have. How to increase the perception of depth and add dimension in a small backyard, how to turn a bare courtyard wall into a design feature, how to transform a balcony into an outdoor room ... we cover all of this and a whole lot more.

With spring nearly upon us and summer not far away, now is an excellent time to start planning that new swimming pool you've been dreaming of. It doesn't really matter whether or not you've been blessed with a big backyard, because with clever design and construction, a pool can be integrated into just about any outdoor space, be it small, sloping or strangely shaped.

If an outdoor spa is more what you have in mind, we have that covered too. While one of the major advantages of a spa is that it is usually portable, meaning you can take it with you if you move, in-built spas create a more streamlined look and can be custom-built to meet specific requirements. And if you want a work-out as well as a soothing jet massage, you can find swim spas that will do double duty.

Enjoy!

Karen Booth

Editor

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Sleek and sophisticated

Refined and restrained, this outdoor design is the very picture of streamlined modern elegance

The new landscape design has created a seamless transition between the built structures.





WORDS: Karen Booth PHOTOS: Tim Turner

The urbane, pared-back design of this contemporary landscape fits hand in glove with the minimalist architecture of the home and its distinctly modern interior.

Designed by Steve Taylor of COS Design, the landscaped outdoor spaces are characterised by sleek, uncluttered lines and a restrained palette of colours and materials. The result is a series of open and airy spaces with a modern feel and a seamless interior-exterior transition.

"The homeowner wanted us to soften the look of the large, imposing home and create a modern garden that

would have impact, be aesthetically appealing and have a high level of functionality," explains Steve. "The home and pool house clashed a little architecturally so the garden had to be sympathetic to both. Also, a tranquil courtyard was required as a parents' retreat."

The area around the swimming pool has an edgy design to complement the modern look of the pool house and the interior design of the home. The parents' retreat also has a modern, though somewhat softened feel.

Every element within each outdoor space was chosen and positioned with considerable care. The Sphere sculpture from Lump Sculpture Studio, for example, a contemporary creation of Corten and stainless steel, sits where it can be enjoyed from the pool house, the sun deck or when looking out from inside the home.

Equal care was taken to make optimum use of the space in the parents' courtyard, from the "floating" cantilevered



OPPOSITE PAGE Well placed exterior lighting ensures the garden and poolside living areas can be used at night.

ABOVE Outdoor entertaining centres around the pool house and the fully tiled swimming pool with integrated spa.

LEFT There is an openness about the design that ensures a seamless transition between outdoor and indoor areas.

timber bench to the Lump 3D Sahara water wall and the built-in planters.

"It was imperative that every element be impeccably balanced and in perfect proportion to the house. Every structure and feature had to complement the home, both inside and out," says Steve.

The materials used are of the highest quality and include custom-sized honed bluestone paving with drop-down coping for the swimming pool and feature bluestone cobbles. Bluestone is an enduring stone with impressive slip- and scratch-resistance, making it ideal for use around pools and in entertaining areas.

The planting scheme features interesting foliage and plants one normally associates with Asiatic-style landscapes, adding to the feeling of tranquillity. There are feature plantings of *Acer palmatum* 'Senkaki' (a Japanese maple with coral red new twigs and branches in winter), *Pyrus calleryana* 'Capital' (an ornamental pear which has reddish-purple leaves in autumn) and the repeated use of bamboo. Three different varieties of bamboo were used. Slender weaver's bamboo was used for architectural screening, Himalayan weeping bamboo for wispiest screening, and black bamboo in pots for height and to soften the hard edges of the built landscape. Completing the picture are groundcovers of black mondo grass and dwarf mondo grass. »





“The outdoor spaces feature sleek, uncluttered lines and a restrained palette of colours and materials”



OPPOSITE PAGE The sculpture can be seen when sitting in the pool house or looking out from the home.

ABOVE The parents' retreat courtyard features a "floating" cantilevered timber bench and Asian-style planting.

LEFT Constructed by SJM Landscaping, the landscape is a testament to good design and good planning.

To ensure the timber-screened courtyard, spacious pool house and newly created poolside entertaining areas can be enjoyed well into the evening hours, there is strategically placed exterior and garden lighting. Special features, such as the sculpture and selected plantings, are uplit for added ambience and to provide focal points that can be enjoyed well after the sun goes down.

Of course, the pool house is the family's prime outdoor entertaining hub. From the fully equipped, custom-built kitchen to the wall-mounted television, it has everything needed to entertain in style, day or night. The poolside pavilion once felt a bit disconnected from the home, but thanks to Steve's design, there is now a seamless indoor-outdoor transition with each space flowing into the next to create a sense of connection and an open feel. ■

Lifestyle upgrade

Featuring lush plants and a rippling water feature, this courtyard is an urban legend



The courtyard sits comfortably between the house and a studio at the end of the garden.





WORDS: Dean Herald **PHOTOS:** Danny Kildare

After purchasing this recently completed new Sydney home, the owners invited me to view what was a blank canvas in the backyard of the property. The space had endless possibilities, with an existing covered entertaining area at the rear of the house, along with a small lap pool to the side. The garden itself, however, lacked style and purpose and needed an aspect to draw people in.

One advantage of modern architecture is open-plan living, which results in wide spaces with large viewports, not only inside the house but also in the external spaces. Such was the case with this property. This provided the opportunity to complete a design that not only signifies use, but also invites the occupant to interact with it. The sight lines from within the home offered a number of opportunities that played a strong part in influencing the completed project.

To express and stretch the view through the space, the floor was laid out in a linear fashion, with long hardwood decking accompanying large porcelain tiles measuring 1200mm x 600mm. This combination of products gives interest to the space, drawing the eye through to the planting at the rear.

On one side of the property, two water-feature troughs were laid in the

same linear manner, housing small bubblers for sight and sound. These are illuminated in the evening. At the end of one of the troughs, a mirror was installed on the wall, giving the illusion of an extended water feature as viewed from the internal staircase.

At the centre of the landscaping is a stunning lounge area set among the vegetation and communicating a clear message about the use of space. With a sculpture at the rear and an outdoor kitchen, the space conveys a mood of relaxation ... a place to share with those closest.

The planting scheme continues this tone, consisting of a blend of modern and lush, leafy plantings of ornamental ginger (*Alpinia* spp.), Mexican lily (*Beschorneria yuccoides*), bangalow palms (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*), century plants (*Agave attenuata*) and variegated mondo (*Ophiopogon intermedius* 'Stripey White').

Two frangipani trees were moved into position by crane; once mature, they will provide additional shelter during the summer months. The inclusion of rhoeo (*Tradescantia spathacea*) completes the theme, while small cape rush (*Chondropetalum tectorum*) at the side of the water feature emulates reeds among the pebbles. ■

The above text was adapted from 21st Residential Design, published by The Images Publishing Group and written by Dean Herald, an award-winning landscape designer and principal of Rolling Stone Landscapes.

LEFT A discreet outdoor kitchen was located to one side of the existing timber deck.

BELOW Modern furniture in pristine white sits in the garden's centre and is surrounded by plants.

BOTTOM LEFT Water troughs with bubblers extend along the length of one of the walls.

BOTTOM RIGHT The flooring is a mix of hardwood decking teamed with large porcelain tiles.

“The space conveys a mood of relaxation ... a place to share with those closest”



Heavenly hideaway

Providing the family with all the privacy they desired, this garden is a hidden gem



The sunken lounge area includes inbuilt seating, a fireplace and a custom-made icebox.

WORDS: Kate McKee PHOTOS: Danny Kildare

When the new owners of this property surveyed the landscape, they realised that not only was it beginning to show its age, it really didn't suit how they wanted

to spend time outdoors. Dean Herald of Rolling Stone Landscapes was called in to update the garden and a contemporary outdoor design began to take shape.

"I explored the possibilities of creating dedicated external spaces for each entertainment activity," says Dean. "With the existing pool level set, I saw the opportunity to use a change in levels to help communicate the different areas while still ensuring each was part of a cohesive whole."

The main gathering point for family and friends is a sunken lounge area complete with fixed hardwood bench seating dressed with soft cushions. The seating is oriented to face a broad stacked-stone wall into which a decorative inset featuring sawn logs has been integrated along with a fireplace — perfect for those evenings when there is a chill in the air.

The lounge area also contains a metal-framed coffee table and a custom-made stainless-steel icebox,

BELOW The open-air dining space sits across from the lounge area and is set atop a raised timber platform.

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP This sculpture is nestled within foliage in the far corner and adds a burst of colour.

OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM

Glass pool fencing provides clear views of the pool and artwork from the entire garden.



nestled into a planter box, so drinks can be stored at arm's reach. To soften the space, the area is surrounded by a hedge of Japanese box.

Adjacent to and just a few steps above this sunken lounge is a fully equipped outdoor kitchen with everything the owners could possibly need to entertain, such as a pizza oven, double-glass-door fridge, a teppanyaki barbecue, a sink, and generous bench space for the preparation of meals.

"The outdoor kitchen is covered by a flat roof featuring flush-mounted strip heaters that make the space usable all year round. The dining area, on the other hand, is open-air and located across from the sunken lounge on a raised timber deck," explains Dean. "By placing the dining area on a platform it turns it



“The main gathering point for family and friends is a sunken lounge area”

into a fun destination point, while the use of timber contrasts the large-format bluestone pavers.”

The dining table matches the coffee table in the lounge area and both were designed by Dean. In the centre of the custom-made dining table, Dean specified the inclusion of a small bioethanol-fuelled fireplace, which adds warmth and ambience when family and friends dine alfresco.

New rendered and painted retaining walls were added to shape the garden and preserve the already-established plants, including a mature date palm. To enhance the existing plant life, Japanese sago palms were added, along with ‘Little Gem’ magnolias, slender weaver’s bamboo, philodendron, variegated mondo grass and star jasmine.

In fact, the homeowners thought their new outdoor area was such a knockout, day and night, that new frameless glass doors were installed at the rear of the home so they could enjoy an unobstructed view of the outdoor living areas from inside. ■



ABOVE Glass doors open up the rear of the residence to create a flawless flow from inside to out.

TOP For ambience, a bioethanol fireplace was built into the centre of the custom-made dining table.

LEFT The roomy outdoor kitchen is equipped with a fridge, pizza oven and Teppanyaki barbecue.



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Hand in glove

This steeply sloping garden is the perfect fit with the bushland that encircles it

The tiered sandstone walls, built by Asset Landscapes, are the key feature of the design.







WORDS: Karen Booth **PHOTOS:** Richard Birch

S

urrounded by natural bushland and claiming a backdrop of tall, well-established trees, this authentically Australian garden showcases the work of Sydney landscape designer Amanda

Elboz of Space Landscape Designs. Although the designed landscape sits hand in glove with its natural surrounds, designing for such a vast property with such a steep slope posed a variety of challenges.

"The key to resolving these challenges was to be ever mindful of the scale of the garden and the unique purpose of each of its areas. Once each area was designated a use, it was then a matter of dealing with the slope of the site and introducing various level changes to create useable living spaces," explains Amanda.

Keen to fully embrace the best of outdoor living, the property owners wanted a swimming pool that would make a bold statement. "The tile we chose for the pool interior, a mix of glistening blue, silver and

black Bisazza glass mosaic tiles, creates a sense of movement and a shimmering effect that reflects the foliage of the surrounding bushland," says Amanda.

"The use of light-grey, large-format paving for the pool surrounds and coping adds further contrast to the intense colours of the pool's interior," she continues.

Once the pool was constructed, the next task was to determine how the surrounding level changes would be managed. The decision was made to create two separate main areas with a wide staircase serving as the transition point between them. The creation of the stairs allowed for the construction of large garden beds.

"The random stacked sandstone retaining walls and garden beds are the stars of the show, bringing a natural element into the landscape in a sophisticated way," explains Amanda. "The main curved wall on the upper level acts as a backdrop for the intimate fire pit seating area. This space comes into its own at dusk, when the golden glow of the fire, along with the subtle lighting, gently illuminates the area."

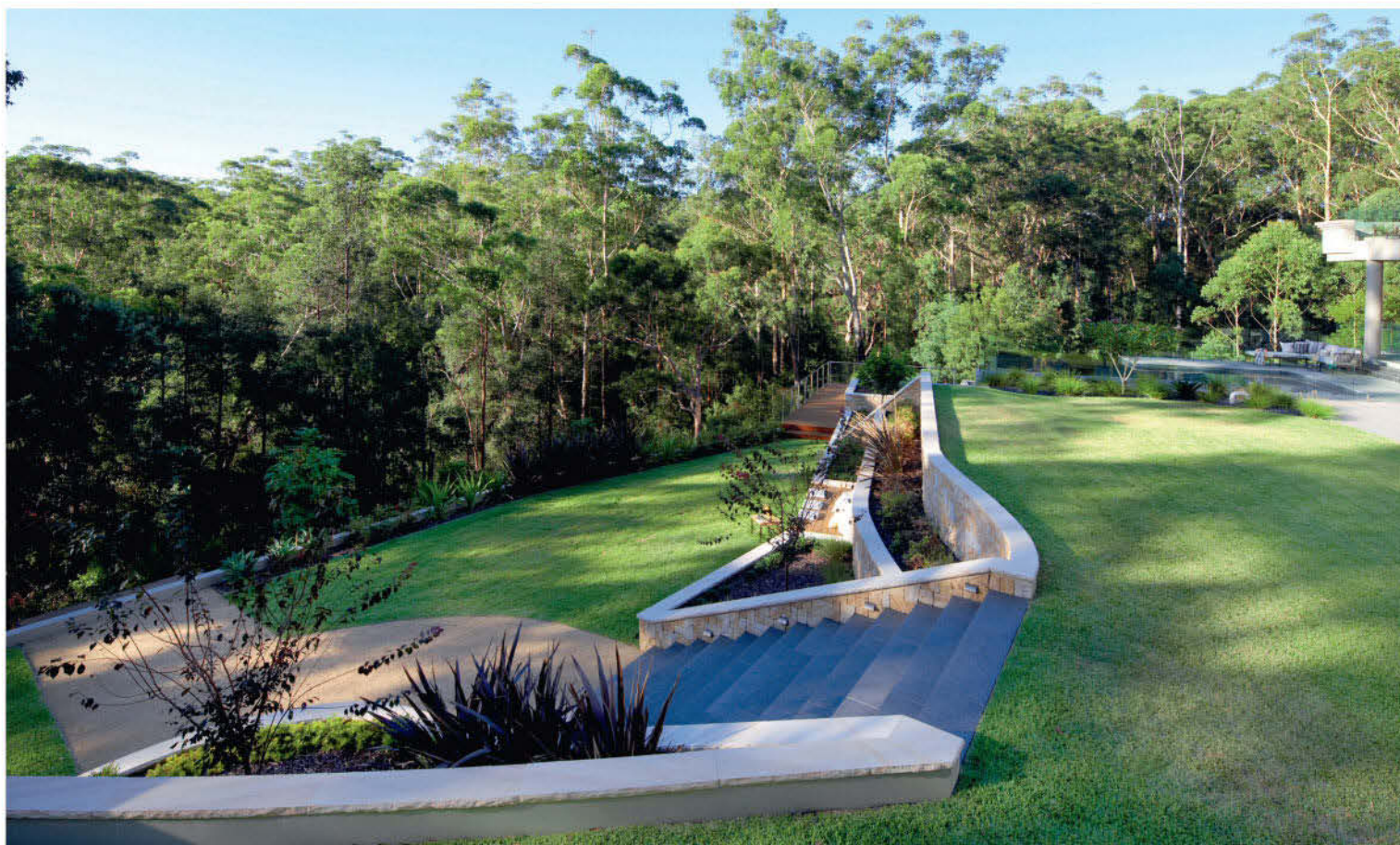
The sandstone walling also links the lower level of the pool area with the rest of the garden. This level features the use of another natural hard landscaping element, namely

LEFT Hardwood timber decking effectively links the lower garden with the pool on the upper level.

OPPOSITE PAGE The negative-edge pool, with its tiled interior, leads the eye to the surrounding bush.

BELOW Modern outdoor furniture turns the paved poolside areas into comfortable places to relax.





ABOVE To tame the slope, the garden was divided into two main areas linked by a wide staircase.

LEFT A curved cantilevered bench provides a cosy place to sit and enjoy the warmth of the fire pit.



“The random stacked sandstone retaining walls and garden beds are the stars of the show”

wide-board, hardwood timber decking. An extremely tranquil space, the lower level features an elevated timber walkway that takes you into the heart of the bushland that wraps around the site.

Considering the size of the property, planting was kept to a minimum. Explains Amanda: “The intent was to create a modern design around the pool and house using exotic plantings, with a shift towards native plantings around the outer perimeter where the garden blends into the bush surrounds.

“To ensure nothing detracted from the bushland view, *Lomandra* ‘Tanika’, a fine-leaved native grass, was planted en masse with specimen plantings of grass trees, tuckeroo trees and cherry blossoms used as feature plantings. Subtle groundcover plants complete the picture.” ■



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Before

After

Taking it outside

A once impractical sloping garden is now the family's favourite place to gather



The new entertaining area presents an attractive outlook when viewed from the house.





WORDS: Karen Booth PHOTOS: Jeremy Greive

When you like to entertain but you have young children to accommodate, you need to think a bit more strategically when planning your garden. Creating multi-functional

outdoor spaces that cater for the whole family's needs, now and as the children grow, is the way to go.

To ensure their new rear garden would meet their current and future lifestyle needs, this family called in Mick Drower of Think Outside Gardens. That wasn't

all they needed help with, however. The site has a significant slope that needed to be addressed too.

The family asked Mick to do four main things. First, he was to design two outdoor spaces: a level grass area and an entertaining spot with a swimming pool and shade. Second, they wanted to create a lovely view from the house. Third, there needed to be an easy transition between the house and the entertaining area and, last, they wanted privacy from the nextdoor neighbours.

Mick's skilfully terraced design ticks each of these boxes and has delivered for the family a neat, contemporary rear garden where simple, clean lines rule and there is a strong emphasis on proportions.

A spacious, level lawn was created close to the house, providing a place where the children can play to their heart's content. The pool and entertaining area





OPPOSITE PAGE Plants, including agaves and mandevillas, were chosen to provide interest and contrast.

ABOVE The family can now recline in the sun by the pool or gather in the shade of the modern cabana.

LEFT The spotted gum decking is contrasted by the coping and the white-painted, clean-lined planters.

is accessed via a set of timber steps that is flanked by flourishing garden beds that were integrated into the new retaining walls.

The cabana beside the pool is designed for family entertaining. It has a solid roof for year-round weather protection, built-in bench seating and spotted gum wide-board hardwood decking which extends around the pool.

The rendered brick bench, servery and raised planters around the swimming pool were painted white for a crisp, clean look and to contrast against the timber. White was also the colour chosen for the tiles that clad the interior of the pool. This makes the pool look light, fresh and inviting, an effect enhanced by the use of light-coloured vitrified tiles for the pool coping.

The simple planting palette includes some interesting and effective contrasts. For boundary screening, Think Outside Gardens planted *Viburnum odoratissimum* and *Syzygium australe* 'Select Form'. These create a simple green backdrop that can be better appreciated now that the existing pine fencing has been painted charcoal.

For height, several trees, in particular *Cupaniopsis anacardioides*, *Michelia champaca* and *Plumeria acutifolia*, were introduced. For colour and texture, »



ABOVE From the cabana you have a lovely view of the tiered garden beds and lush boundary planting.

RIGHT Trees and shrubs were planted around the boundaries, which will grow to provide increased privacy.

“Simple, clean lines rule and there is a strong emphasis on proportions”

there is a mix of shrubs that includes *Hydrangea* sp., *Helichrysum petiolare*, *Gardenia augusta* 'Florida', *Liriope* 'Evergreen Giant' and *Rhaphiolepis* 'Oriental Pearl'. The accent plants include *Agave attenuata* and the *Mandevilla* sp.

Mick's goal was to create interest while not being overly fussy, and to bring functionality to a formerly impractical sloping site. He has succeeded on all counts, giving the owners a flexible family garden. ■



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The sunken lounge area by the pool provides a cosy place to relax with family and friends.





WORDS: Karen Booth **PHOTOS:** Chris Walters

It's what we all dream of having ... a beautifully designed, well-appointed outdoor space where we can relax in comfort with family or get some friends together for a meal and a few drinks. The owners of this property are living that dream, with not just one, but a series of seamlessly connected outdoor living spaces.

The rear garden was designed by Luke Roodenburg of Sand & Stone Landscapes, who created a holiday-at-home retreat that has the simple elegance the owners demanded, and the

variety of outdoor living spaces they required.

The owners were quite specific in their design brief. They asked for a large sunken lounge area for relaxing, a space that could accommodate long sun loungers, and an all-weather area for barbecuing and dining to entertain family and friends.

Spacious, inviting and designed with the needs of the modern family firmly in mind, the pavilion at the rear of the home is the main entertaining hub. The focal point of this space is the outdoor kitchen, which features an integrated barbecue and a benchtop that provides ample preparation and serving space.

To cool things down in summer, the outdoor room has two ceiling fans and to set the mood for night-

ABOVE The new design called for the creation of two levels to add interest and define spaces. **OPPOSITE PAGE TOP** Natural stone was used for the paving and the coping around the pool.

OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM The frameless glass pool fencing ensures clear views around the totally reinvented rear garden.



time entertaining, there are downlights. When it's time to dine, there is a choice between the outdoor dining setting and pulling up a stool to the outdoor kitchen bench for a relaxed snack.

Two steps down from the pavilion is the comfortably furnished sunken lounge area the owners wanted. From this vantage point you have a clear view of the adjacent swimming pool, as you do from the paved sun lounge area at the end of the garden.

Sand & Stone Landscapes used silver travertine paving for all the hard floor finishes, steps and pool coping. Not only is this naturally veined stone cool underfoot, its sophisticated mid-grey colour complements the classic feel of the home. In the





ABOVE From the kitchen to the dining area, the pavilion contains everything the family needs.

LEFT The outdoor kitchen incorporates a bar-style eating area complemented by stool seating.

“Spacious, inviting and designed with the needs of the modern family firmly in mind”

pavilion, the travertine paving also complements the darker-toned Atlantic stone used to finish the custom-built outdoor kitchen.

The stonework is contrasted by the warm tones of the merbau timber used for the large support beams of the pavilion and for the slatted privacy screens used at the side of the pavilion and along the back fence line. *Magnolia* ‘Little Gem’ was planted behind the sunken lounge area, chosen because the underside of the leaves are a rich reddish-brown, which picks up on the colouring of the timber.

As this was a fairly large backyard, Luke spread the outdoor living spaces across two levels, adding depth and interest to the design. The result is a rear-garden retreat that is simple, elegant and in keeping with the style of gardens you typically find in the home’s northern Sydney locale. ■





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Having it all

*Places to dine, cook and relax with friends...
this garden has all the bases covered*

This internal courtyard has a modern feel, from the Corten lightbox to the furniture.





LEFT The Acapulco chairs sit in vivid contrast to the largely natural palette of materials.

BELOW The bluestone paving from Pavers Plus gives the entertaining area a sophisticated look.



WORDS: Karen Booth **PHOTOS:** Tim Turner

Wherever you look from inside this single-level home in the Melbourne suburbs you are greeted by lush gardens and welcoming outdoor spaces. But these spaces, which include

two contemporary internal courtyards and a covered rear entertaining area, weren't just designed to be looked at. They were designed to entice the family outside.

"The owners asked us to design and build for them a garden that reflected the architectural style of the newly constructed house, worked in harmony with the natural surrounds, had a functional layout and provided focal points that wowed," says Darren Wilmott of DJ Landscapes.

Given the size of the project, different design styles were used in different areas. For the two internal courtyards, DJ Landscapes opted for a very modern feel with clean-lined timber decks, laser-cut Corten lightboxes and metal climbing frames. Pendant lights hang from the black overhead beams and vividly coloured retro Acapulco chairs and occasional tables provide somewhere to relax.

"Wherever you roam in the garden you are met with picture-perfect vistas"

The rear garden, which is divided into a welcoming entertaining area and a vast lawn, has a warmer look and a more natural feel. This is due to the outlook that takes in a number of large gum trees and the bluestone-clad walling and granite paving in the outdoor entertaining area.

The covered section of the entertaining space has a dining zone, located beneath a skylight, and an area for alfresco cooking. The latter features a custom-built outdoor kitchen with a built-in stainless-steel barbecue, sink, ample benchspace and a large rangehood attached to the timber-clad ceiling above. Just a few steps away, there is a stand-alone woodfired pizza oven. This has been built into the retaining wall that serves as a planter and separates the spacious outdoor entertaining zone from the upper-level lawn area.

"The front garden is slightly more traditional, although the hero of the space is a contemporary 3m stainless



ABOVE The garden, with its many large gum trees, was designed to complement the natural surrounds.

OPPOSITE PAGE A sculpture made of Corten and stainless steel rises from a bed of *Lomandra* 'Lime Tuff'.

RIGHT Accessed via stepping stones, the woodfired oven was integrated into the newly-built retaining wall.

and Corten steel sculpture that emerges from a band of *Lomandra* 'Lime Tuff'. From the front garden you cross the two-toned aggregate driveway to the garage," says Darren. The aggregate concretes, which had to cover a space of more than 600m², are durable and aesthetically appealing.

More than 300m² of ebony flamed granite was used in this project (for elements such as the porches, the flooring in the entertaining area, and the feature stepping pavers) as well as in excess of 100m² of sawn bluestone (to clad the retaining wall/seal around the rear of the property and the feature steps leading to the lawn).

The diverse palette of plants includes Japanese maples and 'Teddy Bear' magnolias with underplantings of *Murraya paniculata*, *Gardenia florida*, *Liriope muscari* 'Elmarco' and 'Red Wing' azaleas. In the courtyards, the feature elements of the planting are *Ligustrum indica*, *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy' and large cycads.

Stormwater is pumped into two large water tanks at the rear and is used for irrigation. The irrigation system has a Hydrowise controller that uses real-time sensors, via a smart device, to control water patterns and economical distribution to the dripper pipe in the garden beds and pop-ups in the lawn.

Wherever you roam in the garden you are met with picture-perfect vistas which at night take on a whole new look. This is thanks to the LED stainless-steel bollards and spotlights that have been integrated into the landscape design to provide the finishing flourish. ■





DESIGNER GARDENS

Following the creation of an outdoor pavilion, this garden is an entertainer's paradise.



Day or night

Hot summer day or cool winter evening, this pavilion is made for entertaining





WORDS: Karen Booth **PHOTOS:** Patrick Redmond

Blending modern and rustic design elements, the outdoor pavilion in this Melbourne backyard entices the owners outside summer or winter, day or night, to enjoy a freshly cooked alfresco meal or relaxed conversation with friends. In summer, they can enjoy the shade and the cooling breezes that flow through the poolside pavilion while in the chillier months, the open fireplace keeps everyone toasty warm.

The pavilion was the key element in the renaissance of the rear garden which, prior to the ministrations of the landscape contractor Kiama Landscapes &

Pools, working to a design by Mark Browning of Cycas Landscape Design, was little more than a flat lawn and a lacklustre pool area. Following a major pool renovation, the installation of new screening and plants and the construction of a trans-seasonal outdoor room, the family now has precisely what they asked for.

The modern outdoor pavilion has all the bells and whistles. There is a state-of-the-art stainless-steel barbecue and rangehood, a fireplace with integrated storage for the wood, bench space for food preparation, fine cabinetry work and room for an eight-seater dining setting. On the house side of the pavilion is a large open window overlooking a casual seating area and the abundant planting.

The pavilion was built using masonry blocks and then rendered to give it a modern feel. The pergola section of the pavilion was constructed using recycled timber to add a dash of rustic charm and to tie in with the spotted

ABOVE Keeping clutter at bay, the mobile storage bench can be easily moved to where it is needed the most.

OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT The pavilion sits amid lush green garden beds, looking as if it has always been there.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT A barbecue with rangehood and prep space makes cooking alfresco meals a breeze.

“The modern outdoor pavilion has all the bells and whistles”



gum pool decking and the handy custom-made timber mobile storage bench.

The mix of materials works to great effect. The Victorian bluestone paving used in the pavilion and for the pool surrounds works in harmony with the spotted gum timber decking. It also blends with the timber batten screening that keeps the water tank, which is used for topping up the fully tiled pool, and the pool equipment hidden.

All the plants, which include cycads, star jasmine, New Zealand rock lily, ornamental pear trees, *Escallonia* and *Elaeocarpus*, were chosen for their low-maintenance requirements and ability to add a lush feel to the garden.

Being able to use the pool, pavilion and garden spaces at night was essential. Like all modern families, the owners of this property didn't want to entertain only in daylight hours; they wanted to be able to swim, cook, dine or relax outdoors at night, so extensive LED lighting was installed throughout to make the space a pleasure to use come nightfall. ■



Alpine allure

This chalet-inspired backyard sanctuary has natural charm and rustic appeal in abundance



The design of the entertaining pavilion conjures up images of chalets in alpine resorts.



WORDS: Karen Booth **PHOTOS:** Peter Brennan

For many families there comes a time when they start to outgrow the living areas inside the home. This is when you need to look outside to provide loved ones and guests with the room they need to relax and socialise. If your backyard is big enough and your budget

allows, a purpose-built outdoor room, or series of interconnected outdoor rooms, is ideal.

Explains designer Kerrie Pook of Manna Landscapes: "The brief was to create an outdoor living structure which would provide room for an expanding family who had outgrown their small residence. The new structure was to consist of lounge, dining and kitchen areas, emphasise the use of natural materials and have a touch of mountain magic about it."

The style of the series of outdoor rooms, designed by Kerrie and built by the Manna Landscapes construction team, is reminiscent of the type of chalet

BELOW In the lounge area, a modular outdoor setting provides a place to gather with family and friends.

OPPOSITE PAGE MIDDLE The outdoor kitchen features timber cabinetry and a benchtop made of natural bluestone.

OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM Back-lit wall art and a vertical picture window provide a backdrop to the dining area.

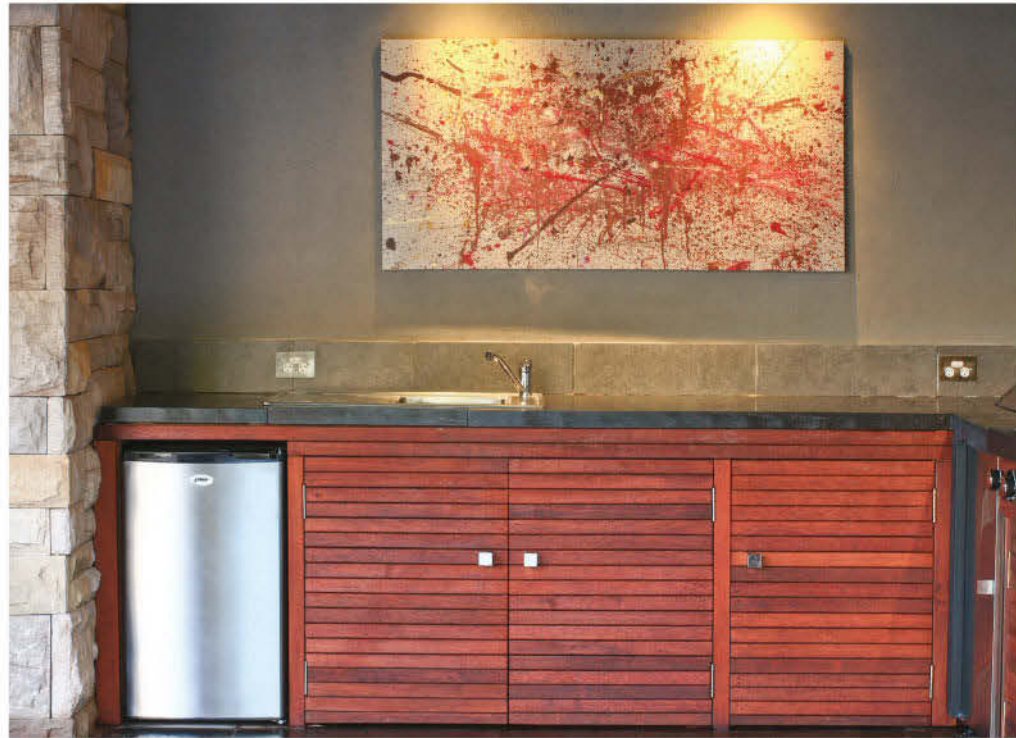


you would expect to find in a European alpine resort, creating an aura of mountain-style chic you don't often experience in the suburbs of Sydney. Appealing natural elements abound but are most evident in the rustic stone columns, charming stone chimney and the inviting double-sided outdoor fireplace.

To make outdoor cooking a pleasure, there is a fully equipped built-in timber kitchen boasting a natural bluestone benchtop, integrated barbecue, under-counter fridge, a sink and ample storage space. The warm tones of the timber and stone add to the natural ambience of the outdoor structure, as

do the exposed timber rafters that sit beneath the pitched Colorbond roof.

On the rendered and painted back wall of the spacious dining area, matching back-lit rust-effect decorative wall panels sit on either side of a framed feature window that looks out onto a natural rock formation and a selection of shade-loving, large-leafed plants. In the lounge area, with its comfy modular outdoor furniture, two wood-framed inset boxes stacked with sawn logs function as wall decor and reference the stone-set fireplace which, in an inspired move, is open to views on both sides. »





“A chalet-style outdoor structure that can be fully enjoyed rain or shine”

ABOVE The stone-set fireplace is open to views on both sides and enhances the rustic ambience.

BELOW The stone columns and chimney give the structure an abundance of natural character.

Frequently it is the behind-the-scenes (or below-the-ground) work that presents the biggest challenges, which was the case here. The site had major drainage problems so that during times of heavy rain there was a natural creek flowing through the block, causing flooding and mould issues in the house. “To rectify this, we poured a large concrete slab, built a double-brick wall behind the outdoor structure and installed a large drain and trenched it to the street,” explains Kerrie.

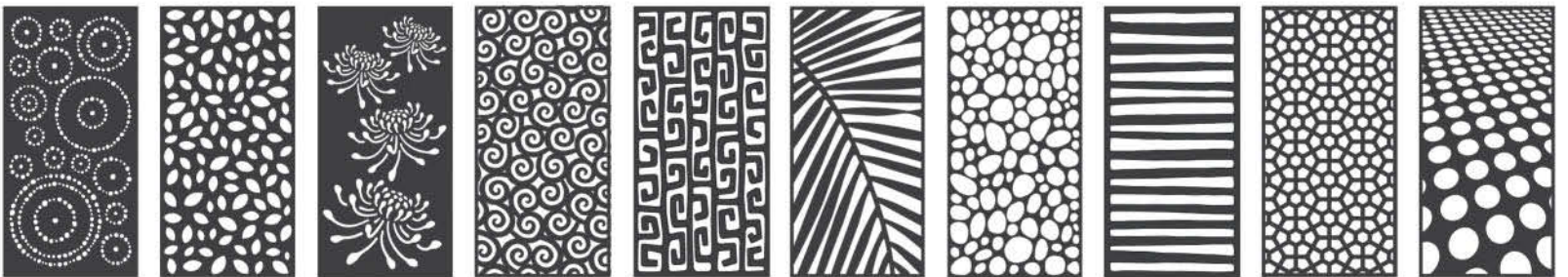
The end result is a chalet-style outdoor entertaining structure that can be fully enjoyed rain or shine and a garden that presents a picture-perfect outlook. It’s also a design triumph where traditional and modern design elements have been skilfully blended to give a growing Sydney family a tailor-made outdoor retreat. ■



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Easy elegance

The outdoor spaces that wrap around this Perth home speak of relaxed refinement

The extensive and impressive outdoor lighting was provided by The Garden Light Company.





WORDS: Janine Mendel PHOTOS: Ron Tan

Reshaping and refreshing the old garden of a period home such as this requires sensitive treatment if you want to achieve a more contemporary feel that also harmonises with the original architecture. After extensively renovating and adding a second storey to their classic colonial home, the owners of this Perth property turned their attention to the garden which had two major areas that just weren't functioning well.

One problem was that first-time visitors had difficulty finding the front door. The natural inclination after

entering the gate was to continue straight ahead, but this route took people through the open-ended carport into the tennis court. What visitors needed to do was turn left and walk past the front of the house as the "front" door is on the side.

The side courtyard adjacent to the dining room was the second unsatisfactory space. This was occupied by a swimming pool, which the owners never used and wanted removed. A major drawback in redesigning this space was the 1m difference in height between the pool courtyard and the outdoor kitchen below. Six steps led down to the alfresco, leaving the pool courtyard feeling too high above the rest of the garden.

In the remodelled landscape, the first feature is the screen walls at the entry, which define this side area as a very separate entry from the informal front garden.





OPPOSITE PAGE The curves of the entry garden not only guide the eye, they also have a softening effect.

ABOVE The new front garden path flows past the house to the steps that lead to the new internal entry gate.

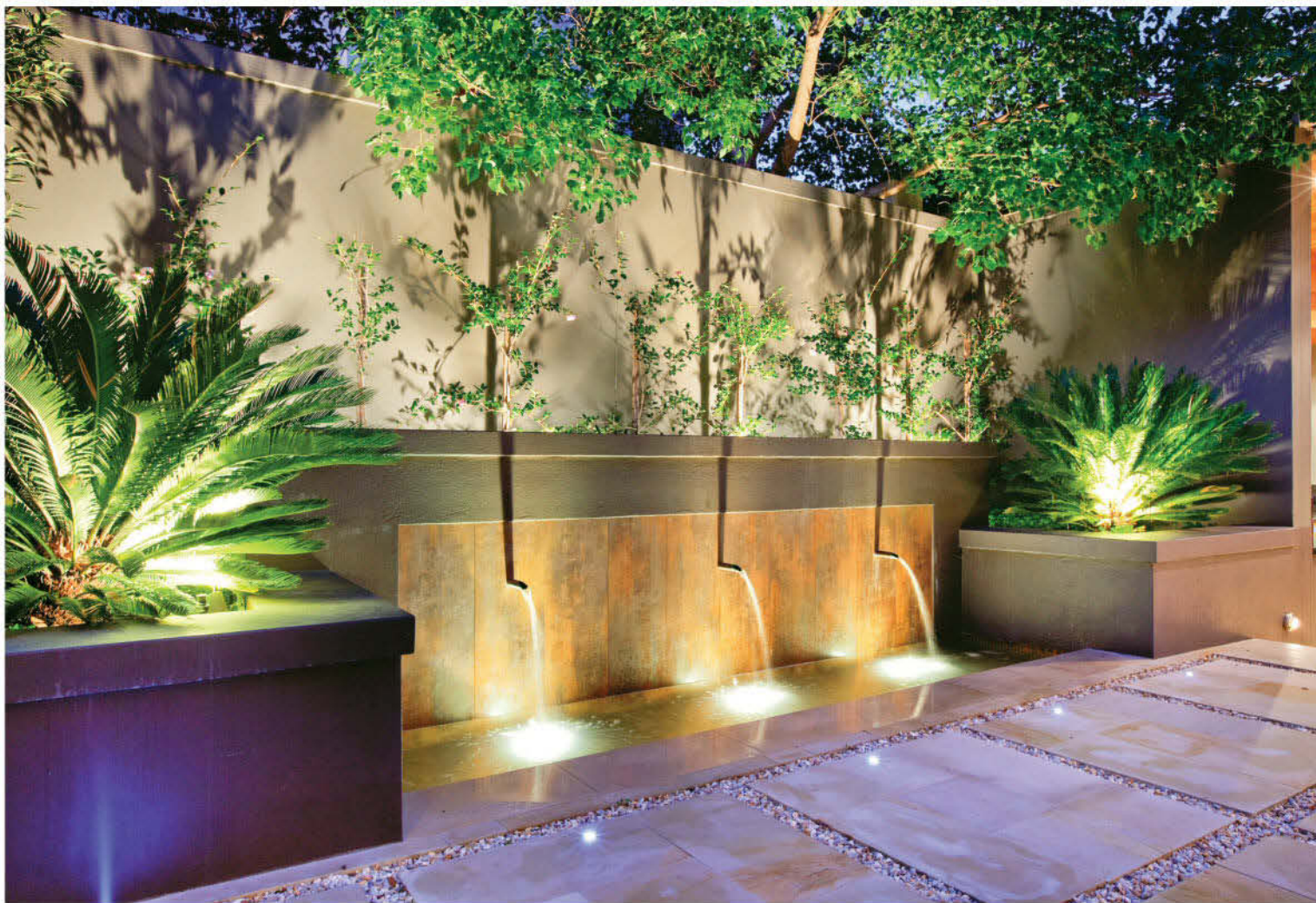
LEFT A large-scale ceramic pot nestles in the first corner of the home's newly defined walled entry point.

A huge ceramic pot occupies the first corner, but it is almost hidden until you glance back.

Given the length and relative narrowness of the space, it was important to prevent it from feeling like a corridor so just inside the entry, where there were five existing specimens of *Laurus nobilis*, I designed an arbour, which invites you to sit and reflect on the scenery. There is a large amount of ornate timberwork on the house, so I picked up on those details when designing the arbour.

Progressing down the side of the house, the next greatly changed area is the former pool courtyard. To graduate the difference of levels, I split the existing six steps into two flights of three. The first set, running parallel to the house, allowed me to create a verandah outside the dining room. The second flight of three steps leads from the courtyard to the alfresco. On the wall opposite the verandah is a





“A more contemporary feel that also harmonises with the original architecture”

water feature comprising a copper-finish tiled wall, with a bronze glass mosaic base and uplights to illuminate the flow of water from three copper spouts.

In terms of planting, there is a mix of seasonal and architectural qualities. The latter includes *Cycas revoluta* in planter boxes flanking the verandah and water feature, and *Astelia chathamica* ‘Silver Spear’ in elegant pots. Floral displays come from the azaleas and camellias.

While the transformation of the pool courtyard was the primary objective of the re-design, the other objective (guiding visitors to the entry porch) was achieved by using a few simple cues. Timber screen doors at the back of the carport indicate a visual full stop, and a strongly curved path naturally directs people’s eyes along the front of the house towards the steps ascending to the new internal entry gate. ■

The above text was adapted from Urban Sanctuary: Designing Small Gardens, published by Hardie Grant Books and written by Janine Mendel, an award-winning landscape designer and principal of CultivArt Landscape Design.

OPPOSITE PAGE The courtyard features Donnybrook stone pavers with gravel for extra textural interest.

ABOVE A timber-decked verandah with ornate timber supports was created outside the dining room.

TOP The water feature is comprised of a copper-tiled wall and a row of three copper water spouts.

Perfect entertainer

This decidedly modern, multi-levelled outdoor entertaining area boasts a one-of-a-kind design





The outdoor spaces are at different levels to add interest and define one from the other.



WORDS: Karen Booth **PHOTOS:** Ron Tan

P

roviding the perfect space for relaxed entertaining, the granite-paved alfresco area of this Perth property spills out from the home's living areas, blending seamlessly with the borrowed landscape of the adjoining parklands. Designed and built by Garden Artisans, the contemporary low-maintenance outdoor living area makes the most of the available space and boasts an array of unique features.

The owners spent a lot of time considering how they wanted to use their outdoor spaces, which were little more than patches of struggling lawn surrounded by failing trees and dated metal fencing. Says co-owner of the property, Kate: "While we knew what we wanted, we quickly realised that designing and executing a specific plan was a different matter, so we looked around for a professional landscape designer and installer."

"Greg and Sandra Young from Garden Artisans sat down with us and talked about what features we wanted, what overall feel we were going for and what we needed out of the space we had," adds fellow

owner, Darren. "They then drew up a detailed plan that showed what plants would go where, what structural and decorative features would be included and where our entertaining spaces would be."

The space the designers had to work with is viewed from two separate rooms of the house (the bedroom and the kitchen/living room) so they needed to create two separate outdoor living spaces and ensure each presented an equally appealing aspect. Two levels were introduced, with the outdoor dining area on the highest level. Raised garden beds, filled with waterwise plants, were built to create different height aspects.

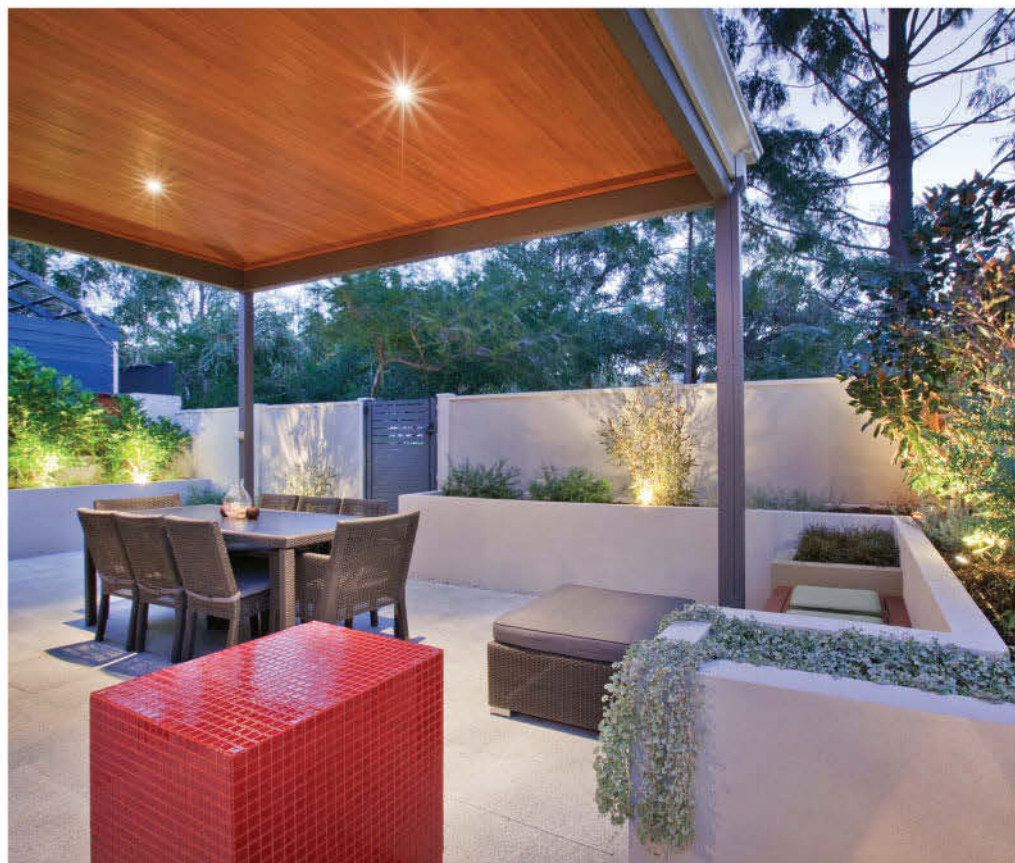
The main focal point of the overall design is a water feature and plinth (clad in a thin dark-red mosaic tile), which can be viewed from both the bedroom and kitchen/living room. "The tiles are exclusively imported by a Perth tiler who uses them in his work but does not on-sell them," says Sandra. "We really wanted to use these tiles as their true dark-red colour matches the kitchen splashbacks and, after extensive negotiations, we were able to source a one-off supply. As a result, this garden has a water feature that is one of a kind."

In the area off the bedroom, decorative elements have been kept to a minimum, allowing the wall-mounted laser-cut metal artwork to take centre stage. Comprised of leafy branches that seem to rise up from the planter bed below, the look is one of elegant simplicity. ■

For year-round use, the paved dining area sits beneath the protection of a covered roof.

“Raised garden beds, filled with waterwise plants, were built to create different height aspects”

BELOW LEFT Integrated into the planter, the timber bench contains cleverly concealed storage space.
BELOW RIGHT The water feature is clad in a dark-red tile that adds a splash of colour to the garden.
BOTTOM LEFT Each decorative element, such as this metal wall art, was carefully chosen and placed.
BOTTOM RIGHT The raised planters ring the space and feature waterwise, low maintenance plants.



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Backyard Essentials ›

Adding a level gives a sense of more depth. Photo courtesy of Mark Rolton Landscapes.

Thinking big

With careful planning and canny design, you can achieve big things in small spaces

WORDS: Carrol Baker

In Italy they call it *piccolo*, in Spain it's *pequeno*. Here in Australia, when something is small or compact we call it pint sized.

Whatever word you use, good things do come in small sizes and that includes outdoor living spaces, for example.

With the trend towards smaller house block sizes, small outdoor entertaining spaces are a reality for many Australian households. The good news is smaller spaces can have as much diversity, vibrancy and texture as larger ones. Here are a few ways to make your petite outdoor space a showstopper.

Be clutter-free

The cornerstone of good design in small areas is defining the spaces so each serves the purpose for which it was intended. Don't waste space. If it

doesn't add something to the area, remodel and reuse it so it does, or remove it.

Justine Carlile, horticulturalist and landscape designer from Justine Carlile Landscape Design, says clutter can be your nemesis in small areas. "Don't overcrowd the area with pots or too much furniture," she says. "Simple and streamlined small outdoor areas will work much better than busy ones that are hard to navigate."

Adaptable elements

Buy furniture that can neatly fold or stack when not in use, or pieces that serve more than one function, such as seating that doubles as storage for plush cushions, throws or other decor.

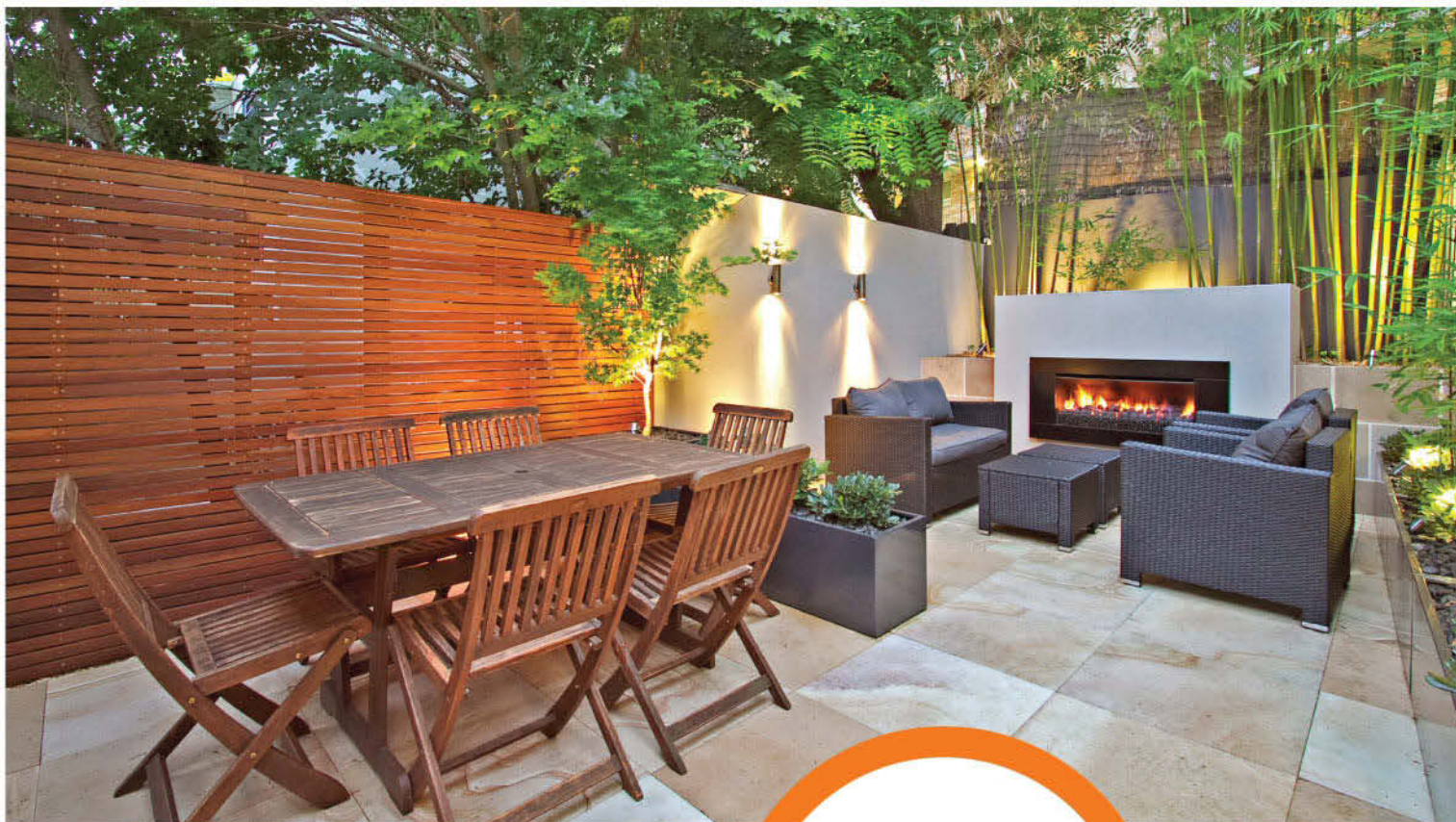
Another space-saving tip is to source accessories or fixtures that slide out of sight when not needed. For example, a pull-out ledge on a daybed. "Use it to serve up cool drinks and snacks when entertaining

and you won't need a coffee table," says Jessica Derrick, horticulturalist and landscape designer from Style n' Simplicity.

If you love the idea of a sunlounge but don't have the space, here's another clever idea. "Consider in-built deck panels that pop up to provide an angled back rest like you would find on a sunlounge. This is another big space saver as it folds back down when not in use," she says.

Borrowed landscapes

In Japanese gardens, designers often employ the design technique called *shakkei*, which means incorporating borrowed scenery. This technique adds a broader perspective and interest to small spaces. It could be a glimpse of a mountain range, the sparkling lights of a cityscape ... even a neighbouring bush landscape. To maximise a borrowed landscape, frame the view with an



Expert tip

Use the vertical plane to best advantage with a wall-mounted water feature or a wall plaque as a focal point. These take up less space and draw the eye up, literally becoming the “high point” of the design.

ABOVE Even small gardens can be divided into rooms. Garden design by Valley Garden Landscapes.

LEFT Vertical gardens and in-built elements maximise space. Photo courtesy of Landscape Constructions.

BELOW A cantilevered bench keeps this small space feeling open. Garden design by Pepo Botanic Design.



arbour or structure so your eye is drawn outward.

If you can't borrow a view to create the sense of added depth, create your own. According to Justine you can achieve this by incorporating structures and planting schemes that provide a 3D elevation. “For example, planter boxes that can be utilised to provide seating, and the layer planting behind will provide depth into the garden,” she says.

Tap into water

Small spaces, particularly courtyards, can heat up quickly. To keep cool add a water element such as a water feature or a small pond. The soothing sound of running water is universally loved, but when you're thinking small spaces, Justine says they add much more, particularly in the evening.

“With night-time lighting they can provide a kaleidoscope of shadows onto the foliage, creating depth,” she says. “Water features made with mirrors or glass can also create illusions and reflections of greater, larger spaces.”

Green it

Think of every surface as a potential design space. Go vertical with hanging baskets with pretty colourful blooms spilling over the edges. Green walls are a popular trend and can be an attractive feature, however Jessica cautions against covering an entire wall in a small outdoor area. “You may end up with what you are trying to avoid, which is overcrowding and closing in the space,” she says.

Potted fruit trees or edible vines draped over an arbour or pergola roof can offer shade, the feeling of elevation, and beauty to compact spaces. Justine says grape vines are a perfect example. “Lemons, limes and cumquats also look fantastic in large pots under-planted with thyme of rosemary,” she suggests.

Multi-level spaces

Designing on more than one level can make the landscape appear larger. Terracing in natural stone or decking on several levels linked via walkways can look stunning. And here's where a distinct





Show restraint

Select features and focal points with restraint if you have a small outdoor space. The fewer objects and structures, the larger it will appear. To maximise the pleasure you derive from your hand-picked focal points, make sure they can be seen from inside the house as well as from outside vantage points.

Choose compact furniture and keep it simple. Cluttering the space with as many pots as you can fit in will make it seem even smaller, so go for just a few pots and aim for plants that will give height. This draws the eye up and creates the illusion of more space.

Go for a theme to unify the space. It can be a colour theme (such as white flowering plants, white cushion covers and white candles), a cultural theme such as Balinese or tropical, or the materials, such as all wicker or all timber. Simplicity unifies the space and makes it visually more restful.

advantage of smaller spaces comes into play. Jessica says you can create something striking in a material you otherwise might not be able to afford, because you only need a small amount of it.

Underfoot, lighter colours for pavers, clean lines and contours can look more spacious than busy

geometric patterns and darker colours. And in the garden, Justine recommends utilising planting schemes that give a layered look as this creates a feeling of increased depth.

Mirror, mirror

Subdued lighting that casts shadows in corners works well in smaller spaces. This is because it opens up the area. Hanging lights and lanterns also draw the eye upwards, creating the illusion of more space. Lights between or behind pots create a pretty interplay of shadow and light. The lights shining up the wall soften the wall area and create more depth.

A design favourite of Jessica's is a large framed mirror fixed to a wall. Floor-to-ceiling mirrors can brighten up a smaller outdoor space, adding more natural light. They also expand the space through the reflection, she says. Add a creeper such as a Boston ivy around the frame and the mirror frame disappears.

Be playful

Finally, don't be afraid to get a little creative. Give tired furniture a new lease on life with paint (lighter colours will work better than darker ones in small spaces). Buy funky one-of-a-kind ornaments to add interest to a tired corner, or link spaces together.

Finish off your design with a couple of well-chosen focal points to add charm

ABOVE Built-in elements and wall features are good space enhancers. Garden design by H2O Designs.

BELOW A water feature in a corner acts as a discreet focal point. Garden design by Outhouse Design.





Level changes

Introduced levels can be used to add interest and create the perception of increased depth in a small garden. While amphitheatre-type tiered seating arrangements would be overpowering, by introducing a simple additional level or two you can make the space feel larger than it actually is. Another way to maximise the space, and create a level change, is with built-in planter boxes that run around the perimeter of the garden or along one wall. These can be used to add foliage and floral colour as well as extra seating (if the capping is wide enough).

and personalise the space. “A large rustic chandelier over a dining table can look fabulous,” says Jessica. “Or sheer gathered curtains placed in corners can give you shade and gently ripple in the breeze, softening the look and feel of a small space.”

There are many ways to enhance the appeal of a small outdoor space. And by planning well and using your imagination, you’ll be able to enjoy your small outdoor room in a big way. ■

ABOVE LEFT A lightbox draws the eye to the end of a small backyard designed and built by Inovasis Design.

“Smaller spaces can have as much diversity, vibrancy and texture as larger ones”



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Bank on it

Landscaping sloping sites and gardening on banks is easy when you know how

WORDS: Glenice Buck

There is no doubt that when it comes to designing a garden on a slope there are many more challenges to face than when you are designing a garden on a level block. For a successful outcome you need to be aware of the obstacles and face them head on. Luckily, there is much you can do.

Managing water flow

Probably the most difficult part of working on a slope would be managing the water flow. This is important for two reasons. You *don't* want your house to be flooded in a heavy downpour but you *do* want the plants growing in the ground to be able to access the run-off. If the slope is really steep, when it rains the

water will automatically want to run down the bank, which can cause erosion and the loss of topsoil.

Solutions include the installation of low contour banks that slow down the water so it can be collected in channels across the slope where it will soak into the ground. Or you could install permanent drainage lines to redirect water to where it can be used. To increase the water-holding capacity of the soil, add organic matter.

Soil stabilisation

If you have garden beds on an acute angle, use plants that have a more fibrous root system as this will help to stabilise the soil. Tufting plants or strappy leaved plants such

ABOVE These gabion walls are both functional and appealing. Garden design by PTA Landscapes.

ornamental grass or agapanthus work well. Also any groundcover plants (for example, native violets, prostrate grevilleas, creeping boobialla, gazanias) that are likely to spread across the terrain and take root will do a good job at holding onto the soil.

People access

It can be difficult to walk up or down a steep block just to do the simple task of weeding, let alone trying to carry bags of mulch. If the land has a particularly steep slope it can even be a dangerous area to work in due to the risk of slipping and sliding. Splitting your area into a series of flat terraces will allow you to form more practical and functional areas. These terraces will also allow you to have space for

flat-paved or decked areas which could be used for entertaining and relaxing.

Points of view

Having a different point of interest on each level creates another dimension to the garden. For example, one level could be used for dining with tables and chairs, one could be for relaxation and contemplation with a day bed or hammock, and another could have a water feature or be a lookout point from which you can survey the garden.

These levels would need to be connected via a series of stairs that would run up and down the incline or you could use sloping, gently meandering pathways which would run across the site.

Equipment access

The way the different levels within the garden area will be used and their maintenance needs really have to be considered before any work begins. It can be tricky to manoeuvre equipment such as lawn mowers up and down stairs so if you have to have a lawn area at the bottom of a hill, consider having a mower which is left permanently at the lower level. If that's not possible, sloping path or ramps will give easier equipment access to garden areas.

Establishing plants

Plants need extra attention when they are young and they will need some form of regular watering while they are establishing. Planting them out on a slope is less than

BELOW LEFT In this garden designed by Gardenscape Design, steps were introduced for access.

BELOW A rocky outcrop was put to excellent use in this garden built by Harrison's Landscaping.



ideal for most plants as the water will run off quickly.

It is a good idea when planting on the slope to mound the soil up a little higher on the lower side of the root ball so that when you do irrigate the root ball, the water is hitting a slightly flatter surface. This will allow the water to pool around the base of the plant and then soak in, rather than just running off. »

Levelling out

Changes in levels can be incorporated into different spaces within the garden, each integrated into the overall design but with its own identity. By providing platforms on level changes up and down a slope, a variety of angles and vistas can be enjoyed as each section reveals a different part of the garden.

The "invitation" the garden offers to move between the various levels is crucial to the success of the design. Steps will be required and the secret here is to make them as wide as possible while keeping them in proportion to the other elements within the garden.



Expert tip

Council regulations may apply to retaining work. If so, detailed landscape plans accompanied by engineering details and other documentation will be needed. The process may take months so plan ahead.



“Having a different point of interest on each level creates another dimension”

Mulch and matting

On very sharply sloping sites you can use a jute mulch matting material that will, in the short term, hold onto the topsoil while young plants are developing their root systems. This matting is normally secured in place with tent pegs and you can then cut holes in the material where the plants need to go.

The matting will allow you to water the plants in the ground while still preventing the soil from eroding. It also helps to hold moisture in the soil. Over time the fabric will break down, but in the meantime the plants will have established themselves.

The practicalities

When installing retaining walls, be sure to check your local council's rules and regulations regarding wall heights. If permission is needed, engage the services of an engineer to draw up plans. And always think about what effect changes in level on your site will have on neighbouring blocks. You don't want to create run off, soil stability or erosion problems for them. ■

ABOVE Level areas have been created and the slopes stabilised with hardy waterwise plants.

RIGHT In this garden designed by Yellowstone Landscaping, flat boulders were used as steps.



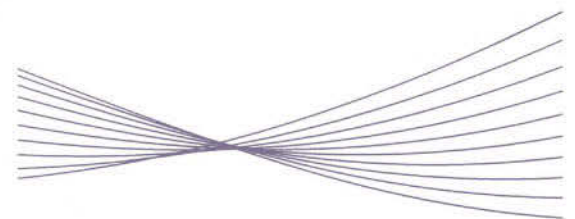
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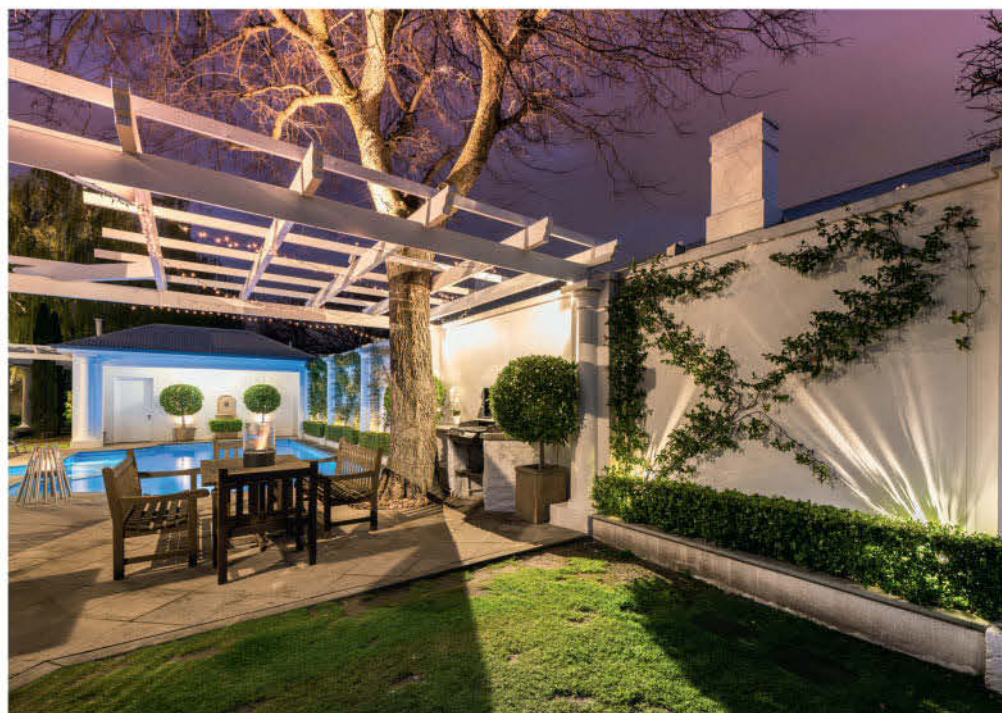
Seeing the light

A thoughtful lighting scheme can totally transform your outdoor living spaces

WORDS: Kate McKee

Garden lighting is an easy way to add atmosphere and usability to your outdoor areas. It can alter the look and feel of a garden, giving it a welcoming ambience, draw attention to certain features and improve the function and safety. Garden lighting can also increase the amount of time you spend enjoying your outdoor areas, whether that be from inside or out.

"If you work the usual nine-to-five job, then the chances of you actually being able to enjoy your garden during the week are slim, particularly during winter when it's dark when you leave for work and dark again when you get home. Why not invest in lighting so you can enjoy your garden when you are actually home?" asks Troy Merchant, director of LED Outdoor. "And just because the lighting is outside, there is no reason you can't enjoy it from the warmth of your home. With modern homes featuring wide open glass windows, garden lighting can help expand your living areas without you needing to step outside."



ABOVE LED lighting gives this garden ample night-time appeal. Photo courtesy of LED Outdoor.

BELOW Exterior and garden lights work together in total harmony. Photo courtesy of LED Outdoor.

RIGHT In this garden created by Tim Davies Landscaping, a side path is lit for ambience and safety

FAR RIGHT Choosing which features to highlight is a key to success. Photo courtesy of LED Outdoor.



their home and select garden lights, bollards and wall lights to suit accordingly. For example, if you have a Federation home, choose a traditional style; for a modern home, choose a minimalist and sleek design,” says Katie Hollow, product manager for Brilliant Lighting.

If you want to create an inviting outdoor space, soft lighting elements such as lamps and lanterns allow for an intimate glow and can be used in conjunction with a range of different lighting schemes. It’s all about the warm glow, so try to steer away from high-wattage globes if you want to create a welcoming space. Decorative lanterns and lamps are a great way to soften and add some personality to a modern outdoor area.

Functional elements

Functional lighting elements include such things as task or safety lighting. Task lighting »

Feature focus

When using lighting to make a feature, draw attention to the object or plant rather than make a feature of the light itself. “With good lighting, you should never know where the light is coming from,” says Chris Down, director of The Lighting Group. There are many ways to do this. For example, if your outdoor space looks over a pond, pool or water feature, using light within the body of water will create a soothing look.

“If you have a feature wall in an outdoor space, this is a great opportunity to use light as a feature,” suggests Chris. “And there are many new lights coming onto the market that are quite architectural and can be used for elements such as trees.” If, however, you are looking for a fitting that makes a statement, Chris says there are decorative lights on the market, but warns they can be expensive.

If you have invested in a beautiful outdoor room or garden design, it makes sense to extend its functionality after the sun goes down, or to highlight special design features such as architectural plantings, outdoor art or stylish finishes.

The right light

When planning your scheme, it’s important to think about the space you have to work with, what you want your lighting scheme to achieve and how much light you want. Different types of lighting work for different purposes. For example, a massive flood light wouldn’t be appropriate for a small courtyard, nor would a solitary bollard work in a sprawling garden area. Consider the space you have, as well as the look and feel you want to achieve.

“When choosing an outdoor lighting range, homeowners should first consider the style of



BELOW LEFT Uplift trees are a feature of this front garden. Photo courtesy of The Garden Lighting Company.

BELOW RIGHT A spherical outdoor light is a feature of this landscape designed by Tim Davies Landscaping.

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP A wall becomes a night-time focus. Photo courtesy of The Garden Lighting Company.

OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM Lighting enhances the water feature in this garden. Photo courtesy of Outside In.



Expert tip

Don't overdo your lighting scheme as sometimes less is more. Shadows can work really well to define areas and the contrast between light and dark adds a more dramatic effect than an overly lit area.

suits a specific purpose and improves the usability of a certain area. Examples of task lighting may include downlights on an outdoor cooking area, bollards along a path, or recessed eye lights that guide you down a set of stairs.

Other types of lighting elements can be used to make coming home after dark a welcoming experience and can help to cut down on those awkward garden stumbles or worse, walking through the dreaded spider webs! Motion-sensor lighting is a great option for front gardens and driveways as it can also help to deter potential intruders.

There are also a number of options available now that make lighting your outdoor

area a breeze. As well as motion-sensor lighting, there are automatic timers and remote-control options so no more stumbling around for that outdoor light switch in the dark. "The use of timers and sunset switches is a great way to 'set and forget'. This will take the hassle out of manually turning on and off your lights, and also allow your garden's best features to be highlighted every night," says Katie

Highlighting features

One of the keys to successful garden lighting is location selection. Katie recommends walking around your garden at dusk to decide which features you want illuminated. "Pick the key features and leave gaps between lit areas.

Longer life

- The biggest trend in lighting is the LED (light-emitting diode). Although the upfront cost is a little higher, their energy efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the long term mean they are extremely appealing. Whatever the size of your garden, there's an LED to suit.
- From wall-mounted spotlights to strip lighting along a deck to bollards lighting a garden path, you can illuminate a small garden, courtyard or balcony with LEDs and it won't cost you the earth when the quarterly electricity bill rolls in.
- One of the best things about LEDs, apart from their energy savings, is their long lives. This makes them perfect for use in areas that are hard to access because you don't have to replace the lamp all that often. Another benefit is that LED globes come in a wide array of colours.



"Your lighting scheme should work to enhance what you already have"

The contrast between light and dark is the major feature of great garden lighting design."

Uplights are a fantastic way to draw attention to garden features such as trees and specimen plants or artworks and allow the elements of your space that you want to show off to take centre stage. Downlights can also be used as task/feature lighting for the same purpose. These two lighting options work well with each other as well. What may be hidden by day can come alive at night and produce spectacular results.

"The garden is like a painting; you want balance and interest. Brighter lighting in the distance can help create depth and interest, while closer up it is important to keep the lighting subtle and subdued. The last thing



anyone wants is to have light shining at them. It is the features you want to stand out, not the fixture,” says Troy.

Eco lighting options

LED lights are beneficial for both the environment and your electricity bill as they won't need replacing as often and will save you money in the long term. “By using low-energy globes, you can reduce the need for larger expensive transformers and reduce running costs through lower power consumption,” says Katie. They also have the added bonus of not having to be replaced often, or in some cases barely at all.

“Dedicated LED fittings are always recommended. They are more efficient to run and will last longer. If you are buying quality lights from the start, there is no reason for the need to change the globe. Dedicated LED fittings don't have globes as the LED is built into the fitting, ensuring the best seal from moisture and dust. Since the fittings are designed with the chip inside, the thermal efficiency is always much better leading to a longer lifespan,” says Troy.

Another eco-friendly option is solar-powered lighting. After the initial purchase of the light, they cost nothing to run, don't require bulbs and are wireless. After charging during the day via a solar panel, solar lights

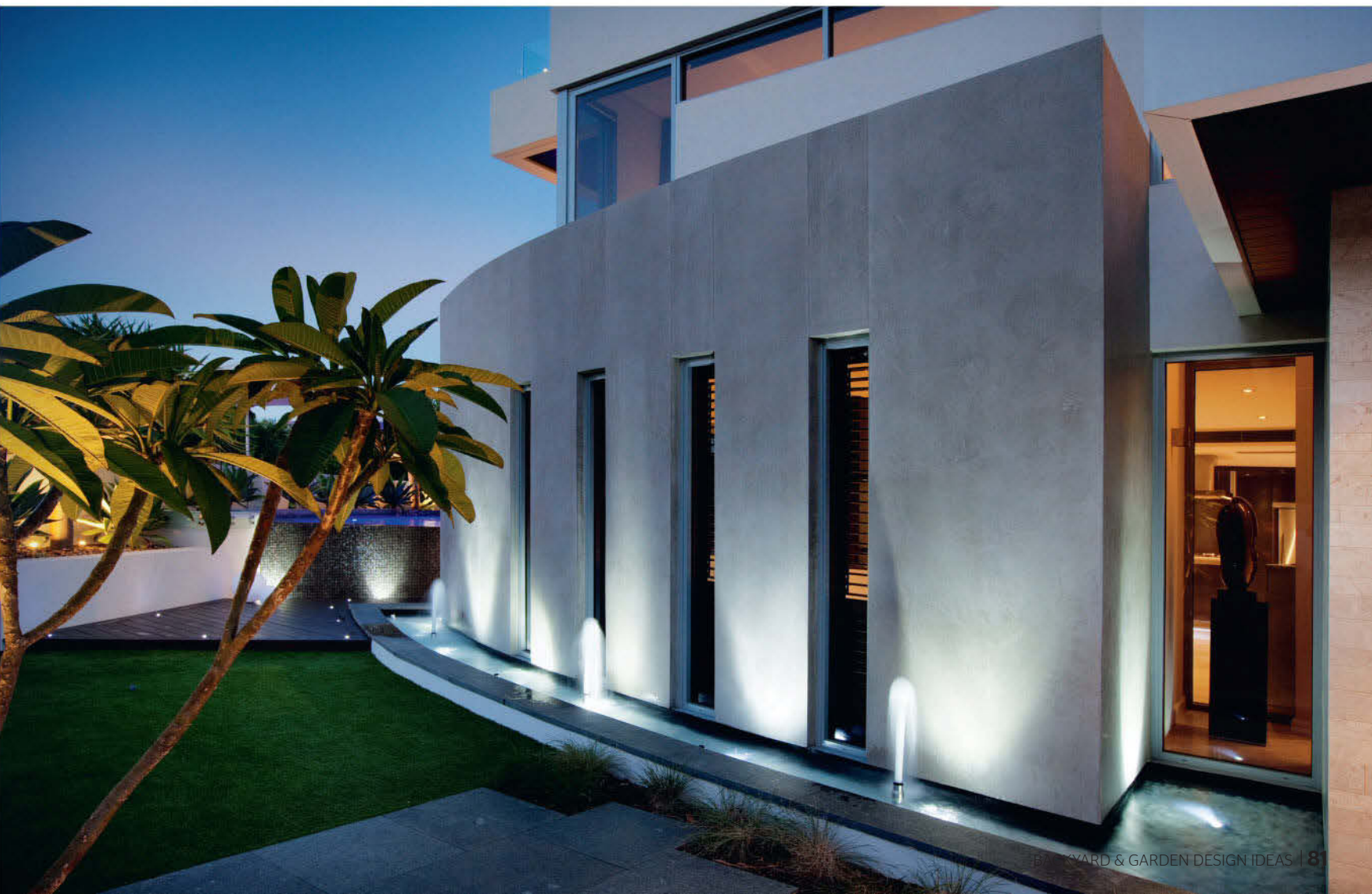
automatically turn on when it gets dark. Solar lights also emit a soft glow so they create an appealing atmosphere.

A restrained approach

Adding light is important, but it is equally important not to go overboard. Too much lighting can be an eyesore in more ways than one. Excessive lighting can make a space seem impersonal and unappealing. You don't want your outdoor areas to give the impression of a dentist or hospital operating room!

“The biggest mistake people make is lighting everything. Darkness is equally important as light, because without either there is no contrast. Light and shadow can instantly add a sense of drama and interest to a space, allowing it to have dimension and depth,” says Troy.

The old rule, less is more, is certainly applicable to a lighting scheme. Your lighting scheme should work to enhance what you already have and not dominate your overall outdoor space. Aim to have your lighting elements work in harmony with the rest of your garden and your home. The good news is that you won't be short on options to choose from as there is an amazing range of products on the market today for every style of home and designed to fit a number of different outdoor purposes. ■





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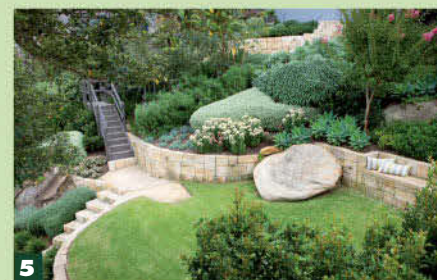


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It's only natural

Integrating stone into a garden will give it natural appeal and a sense of solidity

Expert tip

If you can't afford solid stone for a wall, use veneers. Natural stone veneers come in a wide range of sizes and colours, making it easy to coordinate your walling with your paving and architectural features.



TOP Natural stone has been used liberally and to good effect in this Justine Carlile-designed garden.

ABOVE This water feature uses natural stone in various guises. Photo courtesy of Kihara Landscapes.

WORDS: Carrol Baker

There's no doubt ancient Egyptians definitely knew a thing or two about building with natural stone. After all, some of their most impressive stone creations, including Khufu's Great Pyramid built from limestone in 2560 BC, are still standing. Of course, that took a whopping 100,000 slaves more than 30 years to build.

Natural stone is timeless, beautiful and durable and you too can create something spectacular using this matchless material, but with a lot less labour and time!

Each piece of stone is unique, and according to Nathan Bisshop from Outdoor Secrets, it's etched with history. "Natural stone is harvested from the earth and from all parts of the globe. You could have travertine from Turkey or sandstone from India. Every piece is different and tells a story," he says.

Diversity of stone

There are also many different types. Marble brings with it an impression of opulence and old-world grandeur. Granite is tough, dense and durable. Slate

is cool, hardwearing and beautiful to walk on and sandstone has a rustic earthy look. Travertine has a unique pitted surface and limestone has remnants of fossils etched in it. Both insulate well and are classically beautiful. Then there is river rock, which looks great in dry creek beds or around ponds.

Natural stone also works in perfect harmony with other raw, earthy materials such as timber, or it can be used with man-made products such as glass, steel or ceramics for contrast. The versatility of natural stone is endless, given that it suits both formal and informal landscape designs. And just like a fine drop of red wine, the look of natural stone just gets better over time.

Myriad choices

So what can you use it for? In landscape design, natural stone lends itself to many utilitarian uses including paving, retaining walls and garden edging. But, Nathan says, that's just the beginning. "You are only limited by your imagination. You can

use stone for feature bench seating, built water features or stone columns, for example. Or it can be fashioned into a one-off piece of art that's unique to your property," he says.

Outdoor paving

Natural stone pavers such as bluestone or granite in outdoor entertaining spaces and gardens give your landscape a touch of elegance. The stone feels good to walk on and can be finished in a variety of textured surfaces. For example, a bush-hammered finish offers a rutted effect and a flamed finish, a bumpy texture. Both are non-slip so are perfect for around high-traffic areas such as outdoor kitchens and pool surrounds.

There are three modern trends in laying patterns: stretcher bond (brick-laying style), stack bond (pavers laid straight with no overlapping) and French (square and rectangular pattern). You can also use contrasting insets or pebbles.

Pebble mulch

Mulching is essential in the hot Australian climate. Its purpose is to enable soil to retain water and to minimise evaporation. Pebbles are an excellent alternative to traditional mulching products. They allow water to penetrate to the roots of plants while still enabling the soil beneath them to stay moist.

"Unlike mulch products such as bark or woodchips, pebbles don't ever wear out or break down," says Geoff Isles of Décor Stone, "which means they are a far more durable and cost-effective solution. In addition, whereas some woodchips can change the pH of the soil, pebbles will not. And while organic mulch will fade, deteriorate and look messy over time, pebbles will continue to look good long after they've been laid."



ABOVE Here a bluestone boulder from Bamstone has been transformed into a unique work of art.

LEFT Bamstone bluestone has been used as natural steppers and to fashion an outdoor recliner.

Garden walls

Natural sandstone, bush rock and bluestone are fashionable choices for building retaining walls. Walls can be constructed using relatively uniform pieces for a more structured look or random-sized chunks of rock that fit together like a jigsaw puzzle (drystone walling) for a unique, informal look.

Walls can be dry stacked or the stones bound together and held in place with mortar. Retaining walls and garden beds that are dry stacked look very naturalistic, and are wonderful to showcase cottage-style gardens. Or you can use solid-stone blocks.

Stone cladding

A layer of natural stone like limestone can be cut into fine pieces, formed into sheets, then fixed onto brick or pre-cast concrete structures with adhesive to add texture and character. The final result looks like the real deal, giving you the richness and warmth of natural stone and it's very quick and simple to apply. It's easy to give an uninspiring front fence or garden wall a new lease on life with new stone cladding. »



“Like a fine drop of red wine, the look of natural stone just gets better over time”

Stepping out

Let stepping stones lead the way as you journey around your garden. Natural stone steppers traversing a garden can link garden spaces or garden rooms in a whimsical way. Natural stone steps or stairs make it easier to traverse steep areas in the landscape, and look fabulous. Create a floating staircase with stone steps and groundcovers sandwiched between each step or wide curved stone steps with gaps either side for built stone planters, and fill them with flowering plants.

Natural gardens

In nature, boulders and rocks have existed for thousands of years, each one etched by time and weather-worn as the seasons ebb and flow. Placing boulders in a landscape anchors the space with earthy elements that complement Japanese and arid garden styles. Cover boulders with trailing plants, group smaller boulders together for a cool kid's play space, or edge them around a fishpond or fire pit for rustic seating.

Smooth rounded stones in different sizes can be laid to form man-made dry creek beds to meander through the garden. Use a mix of different-sized pebbles and rocks and plant around drought tolerant grasses, sedges and rushes for a natural look. Once the garden is established, your man-made garden will look as though it's part of the natural landscape. Dry creek beds also offer a practical and attractive solution to problem drainage or eroded areas.

Gabion baskets

Modern industrial meets rustic stone in gabion designs. To get the gabion look,



ABOVE Stone has been used here for paving and walling. Photo courtesy of Domain Pools & Landscapes.

ABOVE LEFT Durable multicolour quartzite and tumbled Pei travertine from Home – The Home of Stone.

pebbles, stones or random chunks of rock are encased in layers within wire baskets and shaped to form seating, garden borders, or even rock walls. The beauty of the concept is threefold. If you source local stone, you're emulating the natural surrounding landscape, every project is unique, and home handymen take note: you can build it yourself!

If the wall is for retaining purposes, the structure must be solid. A typical rock for retaining walls is basalt, due to its hardness.

Decor and art

Natural stone water features and fountains bring beauty and music to the garden landscape. A hand-carved marble fountain looks elegant in an outdoor dining area, a bubbling sandstone water ball brings contemporary charm, or a rustic rock pool with waterfall complements a natural bush setting.

Of course, you don't need the flow of water to make an artistic statement with natural stone. A hand-crafted stone sculpture can look exquisite as an ornamental centrepiece or a focal point in any style of garden. ■



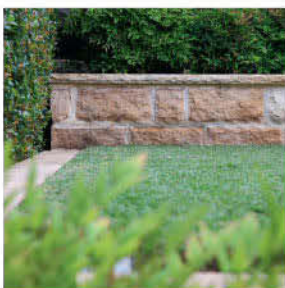
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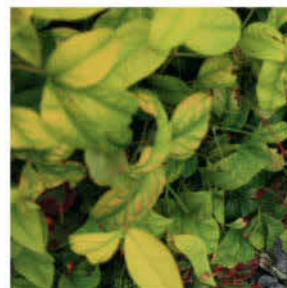
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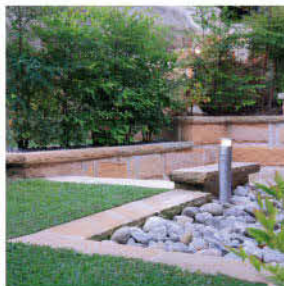
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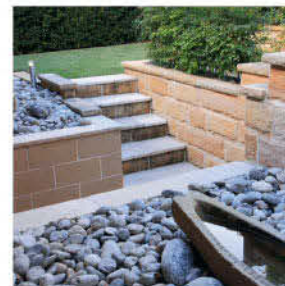
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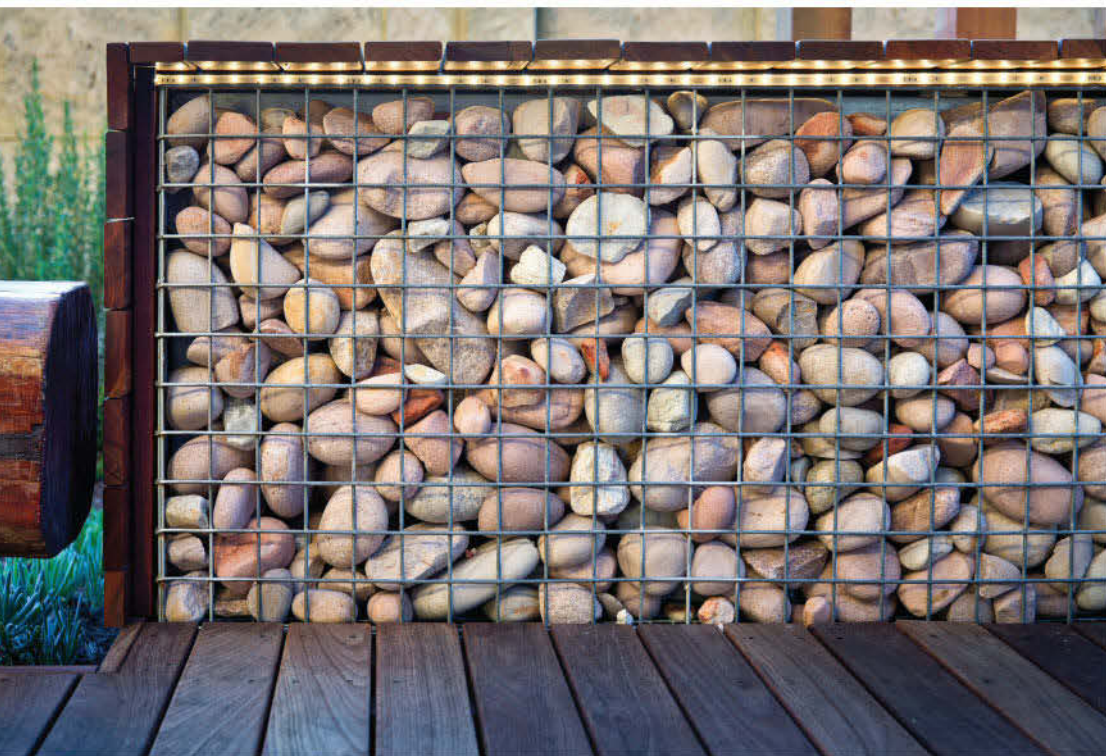


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Why gabions?

- Gabion walls are handmade and designed to suit a specific site, so every structure will be unique and tailored to your needs.
- They are useful on sloping sites as they stabilise the soil and promote water penetration, which aids in ensuring good drainage.
- You can use them as part of your outdoor decorating scheme by choosing a complementary rock colour, or mix of colours.
- If you're planning to build a home or garden from scratch and rock excavation is involved, you can use the rock to fill gabion walls.

LEFT Rock-filled gabions were integrated into the seating in this garden designed by Deep Green Landscaping.

BELOW Gabion walls suit gardens and homes of various styles. Photo courtesy of Nature's Vision Landscapes.

Rocking on

Whether for support or decoration, gabion walls add character to any garden design

WORDS: Karen Booth

Searching for an interesting alternative to a traditional stone wall? If so, consider a gabion wall. Comprised of wire-mesh boxes (or baskets) packed with rock, gabion walls can perform a practical role in a garden or be purely decorative.

Gabion walls suit many different garden styles, from native gardens to modern courtyards and tropical retreats. Properly constructed, gabion walls can provide privacy and sound proofing or retain a sloping site. To turn them into design features, introduce curves, grow trailing plants over the top or arrange the rock in an artistic fashion.

In the landscape

"Although gabions have been around for many thousands of years, it's only recently that architectural gabions, made from welded mesh, have been used extensively for aesthetic purposes in landscaping," says Ally He from Permathene, a company that supplies both kit gabions and single gabion panels.

"The type of rock used will depend on the purpose of the wall," continues Ally. "If used for retaining, the rock needs to be dense enough to support anticipated loads. Typically rock such as basalt is used for this due to its hardness. Lighter, less dense rock (such as river rock and sandstone) can be used for low decorative walls."

Matter of metal

The mesh used to make gabion panels for landscaping and architectural applications is usually zinc coated or a product such as Galfan (95 per cent zinc and five per cent aluminium). For walls in seaside locations, a more robust coating of 90 per cent zinc and 10 per cent aluminium is used. Stainless-steel mesh is another option, but it's more costly.

However, it's not just the material used for the mesh that's important. Says Ally: "Vital components of our welded mesh gabion are the pre-formed stiffener wires that are placed at every corner of the basket. These wires prevent the basket from warping when being filled by rock." And you need sturdy steel rings to join the baskets, which is why it is best to seek the help of the experts.

Things to consider

While gabion walls make attractive fencing, feature walls and retaining structures, there are some things you need to keep in mind. One is that a gabion wall is easy to climb, so don't use one near a pool or in an area where you need to keep children contained. Also, creating a gabion wall can be a labour-intensive task, especially if you're using larger rocks which need to be carefully and individually placed to create the right look.

On the plus side, a gabion wall, like a dry



stacked-stone wall, is free-draining so during periods of rain the water won't pool, neither will it cause run-off problems. And if you're building a landscape from scratch, you might like to use rock retrieved from on-site construction work as filler, thereby increasing your eco-cred and saving money. ■



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1 Intriguing cast-cement Chen + Kai Stone Fruit planters from **Criteria** www.criteriacollection.com.au 2 The Ercole features a concrete seating area and is from **Ak47** www.ak47space.com.au 3 Handmade concrete and polystone 16cm-high Loop vase from **Zakkia** www.zakkia.com.au 4 This hexagonal concrete candle holder in Natural is from **Zakkia** www.zakkia.com.au 5 The Mensch Made concrete wall clock from **The Design Gift Shop** www.thedesigngiftshop.com 6 Set of concrete POP Cube tealight holders from **POPconcrete** www.popconcrete.com.au 7 For entertaining, the concrete long tray in Natural from **Zakkia** www.zakkia.com.au 8 Concrete bowls in black/white wash or grey/white wash from **XO Home** www.xohome.co.nz 9 Cement hanging birdhouse from **Lifestyle Home and Living** www.lifestylehomeandliving.com.au 10 The cast-cement Chen + Kai square Stack box from **Criteria** www.criteriacollection.com.au 11 A concrete round serving tray, shown in Natural, from **Zakkia** www.zakkia.com.au





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Pools with panache

Creating a stunning pool and entertaining area will bring you years of enjoyment

WORDS: Carrol Baker

When you build a swimming pool in your backyard, you'll wonder how you ever got by without one. On scorching-hot days, a quick dip offers instant refreshment. They're also great for exercise, for summer pool parties and family get-togethers. There are endless uses for your pool, not only to help you keep your cool, but to entertain with style.

Because your swimming pool will quickly become a pivotal point for entertaining, designing it to artfully integrate with adjacent covered spaces will help to maximise its use, even in the cooler months of the year.

The addition of a poolside cabana or pavilion to accommodate guests makes the pool area more conducive to entertaining. You can take an afternoon snooze on a cabana daybed after doing some laps, or lounge about comfortably with friends while the little ones splash about nearby.

The perfect position

To maximise its use, your pool needs to be in the right location. According to David Haythorne from Integrated Pools, a well-positioned swimming pool can be viewed from the main living areas of the home so you can enjoy it all year round. It should also be orientated so your outdoor entertaining areas flow into it.

"A good idea is to position a cabana or pavilion a little higher than the water level so when you are seated, you're looking out over the water," he says. "If you have timber decking, you can even structure it so the decking projects out over the pool to create a pier-like effect."

Attention to surrounding landscaped areas around the pool and pavilion areas also helps to integrate the spaces and make them more appealing, he adds. "If you have a flat block, integrate different levels. For example, you might step up to the pool to the same level as

Expert tip

Check with your energy retailer to see if you can run your pool equipment on an off-peak tariff. There are different off-peak tariffs available so you can match one to your ideal pool filtration times.

the house, and raised garden beds can give some form to the backyard," he says.

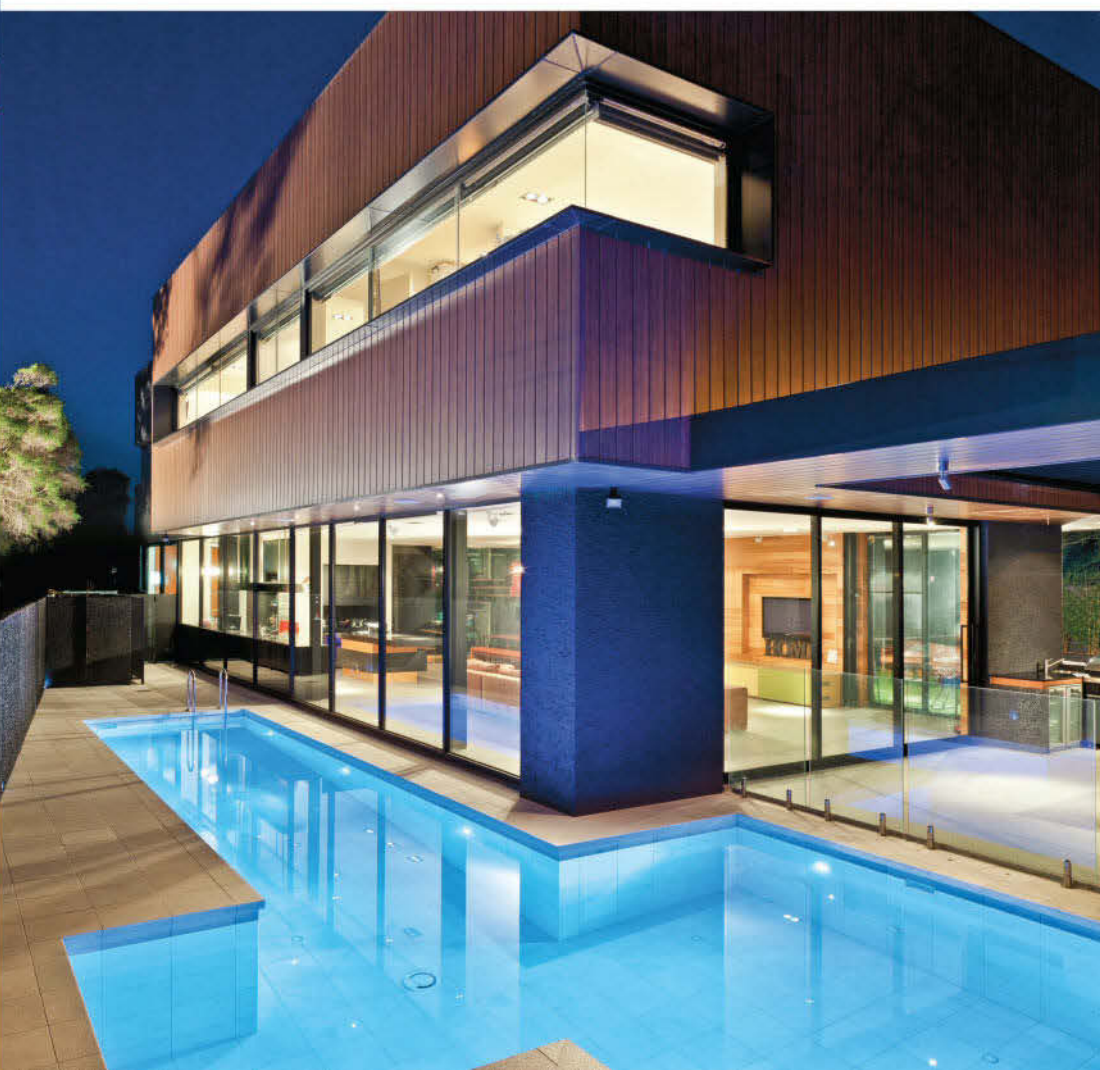
Let there be light

There are many ways you can appreciate your pool all year round with the clever use of pool and cabana lighting. During the day, if the swimming pool has a waterfall or deck jets, it becomes a shimmering water feature. At night, pool and cabana lighting can illuminate selected plants in the gardens and surrounds, adding soft warmth. With adjustable mood lighting, the flick of a switch converts your poolside cabana into a



Pave the way

Choose slip-resistant pavers to avoid potential poolside falls. Porcelain tiles, for example, look lavish but they are more slippery than other surfaces. An ideal choice for pool surrounds is stone pavers as they have a textured finish. They also have natural surface variations to hide dust and staining and can be easily cleaned with a pressure wash. Whatever you pick, Sean Lynch from Malibu Pools suggests sealing pavers. "This protects them from absorbing dust, moisture and algae build-up," he says.



OPPOSITE PAGE Designing a swimming pool in tandem with a house is ideal. Photo courtesy of Domain Pools & Landscapes.

LEFT A lap pool down the side of a yard or house is a good space-saving idea. Photo courtesy of Domain Pools & Landscapes.

ABOVE Include special features in your pool, such as a viewing window. Photo courtesy of Majestic Pools & Landscapes.

romantic spot for dinner for two, or cranks up the vibe to create a party atmosphere.

Furnishings and decor are important to create a space that is inviting for you and your guests. Try grouping occasional chairs together in a conversation corner with side tables, position a modular lounge to look out over the sparkling pool, and include a cosy swinging egg chair the kids will love. For the family, a table and chairs to dine alfresco style is a must. And for when guests pop over, you'll need a bar fridge so you won't have to go inside if you need a cool drink, or if your budget allows, even a wet bar.

The creature comforts

When the weather starts to cool, an outdoor heater or fire around the pool is a must. The crisp crackle of logs on the fire and the warmth of burning embers create a welcoming ambience on chilly nights. Patio gas heaters or heat strip heaters can also keep you toasty warm. **▶**

If you install bi-fold doors, you can open them up fully on hot summer nights to allow cooling breezes to gently flow through your cabana while you sizzle a steak on the barbecue. In winter, cabana doors can be partially closed to retain the heat while you sit cosy and warm inside, perhaps sharing a delicious wood-fired pizza and a glass of wine with friends.

"Add a big-screen outdoor television and you've got another lounge area that is perfect for watching the football and cricket, no matter how chilly it is outside," says David.

Install showers and a toilet and you have a self-contained space. In summer, the hordes of kids that would have been stomping wet feet through the house can get changed in the cabana. But according to David, that's only the beginning. "During the winter months the cabana can become a teenage retreat. Those bi-fold doors will come in handy to keep the noise in," he says.

Keep things covered

There are many different enclosures to help you keep snug around your pool any time of year. James Hutchins, managing director of The Pool Enclosure Company, says there are also enclosures available that offer cosy warmth in winter and can be retracted back in summer. Some models are designed to enfold a larger open pergola by using a nearby existing wall. When the weather warms up, just retract them as desired. In most cases, special permits are not required, says James.

To make the most of your swim time, building an enclosed pool in your home is one possibility. However, that can be a costly exercise as it can

"Your swimming pool will quickly become a pivotal point for entertaining"



ABOVE A covered area will turn your pool into an entertaining hub. Photo courtesy of Majestic Pools & Landscapes.

BELOW The right coping and paving improves the look of a pool area. Photo courtesy of Majestic Pools & Landscapes.

OPPOSITE PAGE You need to take the whole yard into consideration. Photo courtesy of Majestic Pools & Landscapes.





Fence it in

Fencing around swimming pools is required by law to keep kids safe. Boundary fencing is usually limited to 1800mm high, and around the other sides of the pool fencing usually needs to be 1200mm high, with gaps between vertical bars of no more than 10cm and a lockable latch on the inside of the gate. Check with your pool builder and local council for full fencing requirements.

Modern pool fences are often built with galvanised steel, powder-coated aluminium or glass. Chris Nicholls from Queensland Family Pools says frameless glass fencing is becoming increasingly popular. "Glass gives you a clear view of the pool and the area beyond it," he says. "However, it's the most expensive option so many people use glass only in front and aluminium on the other sides."

involve associated expenses of extending your home. With an indoor pool you'll have protection from UV rays during the summer months as well, however an indoor pool doesn't allow you to appreciate and immerse yourself in the luxurious weather and outdoor lifestyle that is very much part of the Australian culture.

Feel the heat

With the changing seasons, sizzling summer days do eventually become cool autumn afternoons. Taking a dip on a chilly autumn day might appeal to some, but heating your pool, at least partially, is bound to extend your swim time throughout the cooler months and keep those goose bumps at bay.

Some methods of heating a pool include solar heating, pool blankets, heat pumps, motorised hard covers and roller covers. All have varying cost factors associated with their initial purchase and ongoing running costs.

Some people choose to heat only their outdoor spa so they can still enjoy it year-round. "Even if the grown-ups shy away from the swimming pool in winter and just use the spa, the kids will definitely love thawing out in the spa and then jumping into the cool pool water," says David.

Or you can heat the pool just for special-occasion get-togethers. If you have a party on a weekend, you can heat the water to a cosy temperature with a gas heater. ■

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Soak it up

The soothing jets of a hot spa are perfect for unwinding at the end of a long day

WORDS: Sunny de Bruyn

There's something very luxurious and decadent about a spa. We usually associate them with fancy resorts, glamorous beauty retreats or celebrities, yet having a spa in your own backyard (or on your deck) is surprisingly achievable – and affordable.

Models range from basic units to the highly complex, and of course there are various sizes available. Standard shapes are square and round, though variation is possible. Furthermore, your spa can be in-built or sit above the surface, so it's up to you whether you'd like to attach one to your deck or outdoor room, or simply have one in the corner of your deck. The deciding factor in where and how your spa is to be installed will usually be your budget.

Is a spa for you?

So why consider a spa? First of all, if you don't have room for a full-size swimming pool or lap pool, they are ideal. But most of all, they are an entertainer's dream and will enable you to use your outdoor space throughout the year regardless of how cold it is outside. Imagine sitting in your spa on a starry night, regardless of the temperature, while you relax in the soothing water with a drink in hand. Bliss!

Needless to say, they are fantastic for entertaining. What could be more fun than jumping into the spa after drinks with friends or a lovely barbecue? They're sociable and fun and create a truly relaxing, laid-back atmosphere. And if that's not enough, they also provide therapeutic benefits, making

ABOVE Spas are ideal for all kinds of outdoor areas including decks, balconies and rooftop terraces.

BOTTOM When choosing an outdoor spa, consider capacity and location. Photo courtesy of Jacuzzi.

them excellent for active people who play a lot of sport, as well as those with injuries or ongoing pain.

Like a lap pool or plunge pool, a spa bath is also a great way to enhance the look (and value) of your home, and many homeowners consider them a landscaping feature. A



well-positioned one with good lighting and attractive surrounds (such as a lush garden or lovely paved steps) will really enhance the visual appeal of the entire home.

Therapeutic, party or both?

Adrian Lacy from Australian Spa Parts says spas are generally categorised as therapeutic, party, or a combination of the two. The one that is right for you depends on what you want to use it for.

“A therapeutic spa should have a larger number of well-positioned hydro (water) jets with comfortable seating, with a variety of jet positionings between different seats. Most have two to three large-capacity pumps. Jets should be mainly rotational for better massage. These spas are at the upper end of the price range. This type is an excellent choice for maximum benefits and limited numbers of users,” explains Adrian.

A party spa, on the other hand, is designed with open-planned seating to accommodate a large number of users at a time and generally has bench seating. “Little consideration is given to the number, type or positioning of jets. If you are buying for the kids, this is probably the spa type for you



Expert tip

The efficient heating and heat retention of a spa relies on its insulation. All electric-heated spas should have a thermal hardcover fitted. Foam on the spa shell or cabinet under the spa will prevent heat loss.

if you will seldom use it yourself. Typically, these spas are found at the lower end of the market,” says Adrian.

A combination spa is somewhere between a therapeutic and a party spa. “These are the most popular due to price and performance combination,” he adds.

Practical considerations

In addition to size and shape, there are many things to consider and options to choose from, including type of shell, colour and surface finish, number of seats, and the number and type of jets. Here are some of the options:

- **Spa shell:** The three shell types are polypropylene, acrylic and concrete. “Polypropylene is generally found on spas at the lower end of the market. Acrylic, with fibreglass reinforcement, is the most common,” explains Adrian. He adds that for in-ground spas, concrete is a popular choice because it makes creating custom designs easy.
- **Colour/surface finish:** Today’s spa manufacturers use a number of coloured and textured finishes. The two main choices are smooth (both solid or marbled) or a rougher granular-type finish. Some surfaces are impregnated with Microban, an antibacterial that makes cleaning easier.
- **Number of seats:** Outdoor spas can be purchased with seating for between one and 10 or more persons. Adrian says the average spa seats five to six



ABOVE An in-ground spa has a sleeker, more streamlined look. Photo courtesy of Apex Landscapes.

TOP Jacuzzi spas have a contemporary design and are ideal for relaxing when friends drop around.



people comfortably and recommends this as the minimum seating capacity (unless space is a limiting factor). He adds, however, that buyers should be aware that a five-person spa may not necessarily seat five adults simultaneously.

- **Number of jets:** The right amount of jets is important. "Too few jets will not provide effective massage and therapy (if that is what you want), however, too many jets will result in poor performance at each jet," says Adrian. He adds that having more jets is not necessarily better. Rather, consider the number of pumps supplying the

quantity of jets when comparing spas.

- **Type of jets:** The two main types of jets are directional and rotating jets. "For good hydrotherapy, more rotating jets are better, combined with seats containing multi-directional jets, usually designed to penetrate into deep muscle tissue," explains Adrian.
- **Added extras:** There are also plenty of "non-operational features" that don't affect the running of the spa but can enhance your spa experience considerably, adds Adrian. Examples include lights, fibre optics, stereos, pop-up TV screens, waterfalls and even aromatherapy dispensers.

- **Overall spa size:** Consideration must be given to the space your new spa will occupy once it is in position. "Sizes can vary dramatically, however most spas are from 1900mm-2400mm square," says Adrian. He adds that homeowners should always check that access to their property is suitable and that it will actually be possible to get the spa in! "Take into consideration the eaves' height, downpipes, fences, retaining walls and so on. In some cases a crane delivery will be required," he explains.

Your warranty

Adrian Lacy from Australian Spa Parts says the warranty you receive with your spa is probably the most important individual factor in your decision.

"The warranty will set out your protection against failure of the spa shell structure, shell surface, plumbing and electrical/electronic components. Particularly the length of time the electricals/electronics are protected for should be the main focus as this is where the greatest expense can be, post warranty," he says.

Adrian also advises to be aware that there can be many warranty exclusions or restrictions on the spa you purchase. "Most spa manufacturers pass on warranty claims to the respective equipment manufacturer," he adds.



“Imagine sitting in your spa on a starry night, regardless of the temperature, while you relax in the soothing water”

ABOVE To get the most use from your new spa, provide shelter. Photo courtesy of Gordon Avenue Pools & Spas.
OPPOSITE PAGE TOP To enhance the whole experience, place your spa where you can capture a pleasing view.
OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM Choose finishes that complement your outdoor design. Photo courtesy of Jacuzzi.

Swim spas

Swim spas are ideal for those who want both relaxation and fitness from their spa. The way a swim spa works is that water is taken from the spa and pumped through jet streams, producing a strong, concentrated flow of water that can be used to swim or walk in. Basically, you can set the pressure/resistance level of the water to suit the activity.

Swim spas are available in different sizes and some can seat up to 10 people when they are being used for relaxation rather than exercise. There are many models on the market with different designs. Some are better suited to swimming than others as they have larger swim areas, depths and better-quality swim jets. A swim spa can be above ground, or set into a deck like a traditional pool.

How much maintenance?

It is important to realise that all spas are high maintenance. “Spas are high-performance products. With performance comes component stressing and failures. It is not a regular occurrence, but you should expect that repairs will be required along the way,” says Adrian.

In addition, he says chemicals must be used in every spa. “Proper chemical care is critical to the life of your spa and your own health, jet bearings and equipment. Your warranty is in jeopardy if chemical use is not correct,” says Adrian. In addition, he also says that all necessary chemicals must be used: sanitisers, oxidisers, pH-adjusting chemicals and a pH buffer.

Fencing requirements

In most regions of Australia, Adrian says a spa is covered by the same requirements as a swimming pool. “A thermal hard cover is rarely sufficient to conform to legal child protection requirements,” he says. In general, Adrian says you will require:

- a 1200mm-high fence with horizontal rails no closer together than 900mm
- gaps between vertical slats no greater than 100mm
- an outward-opening, self-closing and -latching gate

In addition, he says that no items that can be dragged across to the fence or climbed upon to gain access over the fence or to the gate latch are to be placed in proximity to the spa. And, he adds, “Always check with your local council as to current legal fencing requirements for your area.” ■



Plan for success

A landscape plan can save time and money and is essential to a successful outcome

WORDS: Georgia Harper

Having a plan for any project is a good idea, and a landscape is no different. A landscape plan gives you a defined version of the finished product so you will know exactly how the garden will look: what plants will be used and where, the positioning of both structural and decorative features, what materials will be employed for paving, where the light fittings will be placed and so on.

If you're planning to do the work yourself, especially if it will be carried out in stages, a plan will serve as your guide and ensure the finished result will be cohesive and true to the original design intent.

If you're having the project professionally constructed, a comprehensive plan is essential. This is because when you're obtaining quotes for the work, each quote will be based on exactly the same design and exactly the same specifications (plants, materials, structural elements etc). A detailed plan also means the landscape contractor can quote accurately and there will be no confusion about what goes where when work on your new garden begins.

Coordinated approach

The other main benefit of planning your landscape is that every aspect of your design is worked out before the actual building process begins. There may be permits required and issues (such as access or positioning of pipes and underground cables) you had not considered and having a proper plan allows you to address all of these before you start.

In short, having a plan ensures everyone will be on the same page from the first day of the project to the last, saving you headaches as well as money lost through delays and confusion.

The first step is an initial consultation with a landscape designer. This is basically a brainstorming session where ideas are bounced around and possibilities explored. If you don't like what the designer comes up with or you don't feel you're on the same wavelength, you don't have to progress to the next stage but you will have to pay for the consultation. Typically a set rate will be charged so make sure you're clear on what the fee is before committing to the consultation.

Making a plan

Once you've found the right designer for you and you've decided to proceed with a landscape plan,



The benefits

Designers are trained to work in a variety of styles and have the experience to offer design solutions that you might not have considered. They can also focus your attention on the practical realities so that everything is properly planned from the outset and no expensive mistakes are made. Even if you have fantastic ideas of your own, a good designer will help you to refine them and show you how you can turn your dream garden into a reality. Working with a professional really will save you money in the long run.

the designer will generally follow some or all of the following steps:

- **Site survey and analysis:** This is a review of aspect, soil type, views in and out, things to be retained, permissions required etc.
- **Concept sketches:** These are initial sketches that show the developing design concept (including examples of all the proposed elements, section drawings, elevations etc) which are presented to you in a meeting for further discussion and refinement.
- **Sketch plan:** This is a more specific and detailed version of the agreed-upon concept sketch which is, once again, presented for your approval. This forms the basis for the final master plan your contractor will work from.



Expert tip

Try to visit projects the landscape designer has completed in the past or ask to speak to former clients to see how they found the design experience. At the very least, ask the designer to show you photos and plans of past projects.

Initial meeting

The initial consultation allows you to “dip your toe in” before you commit to a landscape plan. Generally, a preliminary consultation runs for an hour (possibly more) and is charged at a set rate. It gives you a chance to talk about your needs and your ideas and to listen to the designer’s initial suggestions so you can get a feel for their approach and a sense of whether you gel with them as a person.

Every designer is different so be sure to ask about their approach before confirming an appointment. Also ask about their fees upfront. Consultations are charged differently by different designers, based on the length of time and what they cover, the designer’s level of expertise and experience, and what distance they have to travel if the meeting is to take place on site.

- **Working drawings:** These are drawings of the structural elements (such as retaining walls or pergolas), along with their specifications. This enables your contractor to correctly build them and provide an accurate quote.
- **Tendering documents:** This is a set of plans to be given to quoting contractors. It includes specifications on all of the elements plus methods of work.

As you can see, there is a lot of work involved in developing a landscape plan but it is an essential exercise. Constructing a landscape is a significant investment and proper planning helps to iron out any bugs and ensure that all the key decisions are confirmed before any work begins, saving you time and money in the long run. ■

This article was written by Georgia Harper of Georgia Harper Landscape Design on behalf of the Australian Institute of Landscape Designers & Managers (AILDM): www.aildm.com.au



TOP A sketch plan forms the basis for the final master plan the contractor uses. Plan courtesy of Georgia Harper.

ABOVE Good planning ensured best use of space was made in this garden designed and built by Secret Gardens.

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP In this project designed by Georgia Harper, a once bare rooftop is now an inviting garden.

OPPOSITE PAGE MIDDLE Plans show you where everything goes, including art. Photo courtesy of Art In Green.



Fabulous foliage

Add year-round interest to your garden using leaf colour, shape and texture

WORDS: Glenice Buck

Flowers are always seen as the stars of the garden but the sad reality is that the majority of flowers are short-lived, putting on a show only intermittently throughout the year.

The leaves of plants often get overlooked in favour of their flowers, but foliage plays just as vital a role. It provides a backdrop to the flowers and gives a garden structure, but it can do so much more. With a bit of planning, it is easy to make foliage, with its many contrasting colours, sizes, shapes and texture, the star of your garden for the whole year.

Foliage combinations

When designing a planting scheme you need to consider how different foliage colour combinations will work together, just as you do with flowers. In fact, it is almost more important to consider foliage colour as it will be there all year round, unless of course the plant is deciduous. Another factor to consider is any patterning on the leaves. Some of the most common examples include:

- **Shades of green:** Even a planting scheme focused on different shades of green can be interesting. Using different greens creates a lush-looking garden and if you use dark greens, apple greens and lime greens together you will give a garden definition as well as a calming feel.
- **Variegated foliage:** There are many types of variegated foliage. A green and white variegation or a yellow and green variegation will lighten a shady corner and make the space feel cool.
- **Painted or patterned:** Some leaves look like they have been individually hand-painted. Some foliage patterns can be so delicate that they almost don't look real. Others are so blended that you know only nature could have produced such an effect.
- **Striking single shades:** Foliage really does come in nearly every imaginable colour. Strong deep reds, purples and black will create a bold impact. Silvers add a softness to any planting scheme while yellow or golden foliage can look luminescent in a shaded spot in the garden.

Expert tip

For a coordinated look, use foliage colour to pick up the decorating accents in your outdoor space. If you have yellow cushions or pots, golden leaves throughout the surrounding garden will tie everything together.



Shape and size

Leaves come in a great many different shapes and sizes and the way you combine these will add more interest to your garden. A leaf may be elliptical, rounded, heart-shaped, palmate (having five or more lobes), oblong, linear, shield-shaped, sword-shaped or even divided into many little leaves.

The edges or margins of leaves will vary and this also affects the look of the leaf. They may be smooth, serrated, scalloped or lobed. If you can mix contrasting leaf shapes and sizes together, this will give the garden the appearance of more depth and movement. It will also make it more interesting, which is important for a garden element that will be on show year-round.

Textural interest

Leaves also have many different finishes to them, similar to the different finishes in metal work, paving or even wallpaper. Using textural variation in your planting will make a garden more appealing. It will also make you want to reach out and touch the plants.

Some leaves have a thick leathery texture and a glossy veneer, such as *Camellia japonica*. Others are covered in fine, smooth hairs which create a soft fluffy effect, such

Seasonal displays

"While some gardeners think a garden without lots of flowers doesn't show seasonal change, there are many plants with leaves that change colour in response to shorter day lengths or falling temperatures. Apart from deciduous shrubs and trees, many plants change colour but don't lose their leaves," says Catherine Stewart, editor of gardening blog, GardenDrum (gardendrum.com).

"Succulents such as the popular flapjacks (*Kalanchoe thyrsiflora*) have bluish leaves through the summer but, when winter approaches, the leaves turn a fabulous red. Goldfussia (*Strobilanthes anisophyllus*) changes from a deep green to a rich metallic red-purple, and dwarf nandina (*Nandina domestica*) leaves develop a vibrant red-orange colour."

as *Strobilanthes* 'Silver Shield' and *Stachys byzantina*. Some leaves can be rough and hard, such as *Miscanthus transmorrisonensis*.

For advice on combining foliage plants in a garden, speak to your landscape designer, a horticulturist or your local plant nursery. ■



OPPOSITE PAGE TOP Low-maintenance plants with burgundy and green foliage add colour and interest.

OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM Purple fountain grass is known for its dark-burgundy red to bronze foliage.

ABOVE *Aloe vera* is an arresting succulent with thick lance-shaped leaves and distinctive serrated edges.



ROLAWAY
UNDERGROUND HOSE

"ALMOST INVISIBLE"

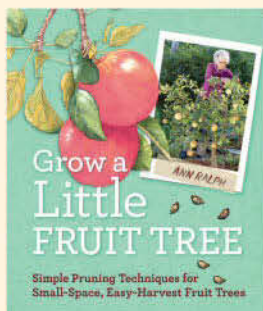
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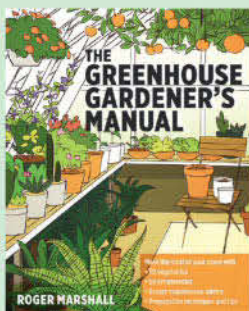
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Grow a Little Fruit Tree

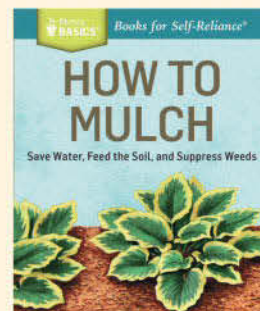
You don't need to be blessed with a big backyard to grow your own fruit, says expert pruner Ann Ralph. You can grow apples, figs, plums, cherries, pears, apricots and peaches in the smallest garden ... it all comes down to pruning. By pruning fruit trees to a more manageable size, you will be rewarded with an expanded small-space edible planting palette and high-performing little trees that require less ongoing care. The book takes you through everything you need to know, from choosing rootstock, grafting and planting in containers to soil condition, mulching and watering. Detailed advice and instructions on pruning techniques and implementing a timed pruning plan is, of course, also provided.



Roger Marshall
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The Greenhouse Gardener's Manual

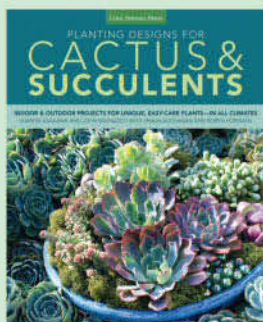
If you want to extend your growing season or increase your chances of nurturing a plant not naturally adapted to your region, a greenhouse is a great idea. If greenhouse gardening is new to you, this book is a great reference source. In *The Greenhouse Gardener's Manual*, Roger Marshall provides you with every tool and technique you need to successfully grow edibles and ornamentals in a well-maintained greenhouse. You will learn how to choose the right greenhouse for your needs, create a healthy environment, start seeds and propagate, and maintain your greenhouse. Marshall also offers plant profiles with complete growing information for hundreds of popular edible and ornamental plants.



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How To Mulch

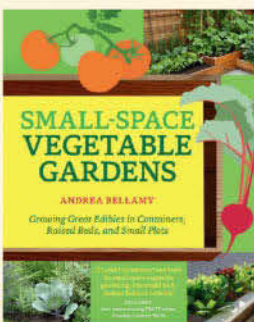
Once, mulching was mainly used on vegetable gardens but today it is widely used for flower beds and landscape plantings. The best way to feed the soil, suppress weeds and save water is to mulch, whether it's edible or ornamental gardening you're interested in. Although it's a simple technique, there's a bit more to it than you might think and this handy little guide answers all your mulching questions. The guide is divided into three parts: "The Whys and Whats of Mulching", "Types of Mulch" and "Here's to Mulch". The final part takes a close-up look at mulching ornamental plantings (trees, shrubs and mixed flower beds), vegetable gardens and perennial fruits. The advice is simple and succinct.



Sharon
Asakawa
& John
Bagnasco
Published
by Cool
Springs Press,
rrp \$29.99

Planting Designs for Cactus & Succulents

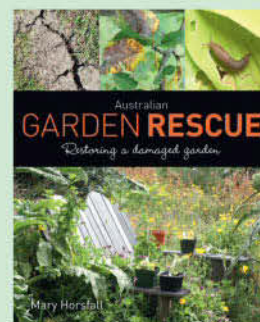
Succulents are the ultimate low-care plants, able to withstand erratic rainfall, poor soil and outright neglect. That, along with their astounding range of colours and forms, makes them ideal for those who want an attractive, low-maintenance garden. More than 20 how-to projects are paired with step-by-step photos, teaching you how to make your own terrariums, dish gardens, living "paintings," xerispheres, centrepieces, birdhouse roofs, picture frames and more. Just when you'd given up, *Planting Designs for Cactus & Succulents* comes to the rescue as your comprehensive guide to the plants that can survive in some of the least-nurturing environments on Earth.



Andrea
Bellamy
Published by
Timber Press,
rrp \$29.95

Small-Space Vegetable Gardens

You can grow vegetables anywhere, including balconies, decks, walls, or wherever you find room. *Small-Space Vegetable Gardens* explains how to grow a bounty of delicious edibles in the smallest spaces. Andrea Bellamy, the Canadian author of the award-winning blog *Heavy Petal*, shares all the knowledge she's gained from years of gardening small: how to assess a space, how to plan and build a garden, and how and when to harvest. She also highlights the top edible plants for small spaces and offers complete information on how to sow, grow and harvest them. This enthusiastic guide teaches gardeners how to take advantage of the space they have to create the food garden of their dreams.



Mary Horsfall
Published
by CSIRO
Publishing,
rrp \$39.95

Australian Garden Rescue

Whether you have a garden suffering from lack of attention, damaged from weather events or suffering pest attacks, *Australian Garden Rescue* offers an abundance of practical solutions, helpful tips and preventative tactics to minimise future harm. The author, Mary Horsfall, explores how our harsh climate can impact gardens, including the effects of bushfires, floods, frost, storms and heatwaves. She also addresses problems caused by various pests, from possums, snails and caterpillars to fungi and weeds. With an emphasis on environmentally friendly strategies, this illustrated guide provides tactics for gardeners repairing recent damage or tackling prolonged neglect, regardless of your garden's size or location.

Rescue a dog
and it'll
do the same
for you.
doggierescue.com.au



What's in store

Garden art, planters and fireplaces with a natural rust finish



Enjoy the glow

Think Outside, an Australian company founded by Aaron Jackson, produces handcrafted pieces, each with its own unique character. One of the latest additions to the range is the Butterfly Sphere. This is available in large and small, and there is a hanging version that accommodates electric lighting and a freestanding version that takes candles. Think Outside products, which include sculpture and outdoor furniture, are available Australia wide. For more information: www.thinkoutside.biz

Doing double duty

If you're short on space and you need an outdoor fireplace that can do double duty as an artwork, the Zen fire bowl from Entanglements is an ideal solution. The Zen, which is made of mild steel and has a diameter of 750mm, comes with a stainless-steel bioethanol fire burner (and lid) that can be easily placed in position or removed as needed. Base plinths are available upon request, as are custom finishes and sizes. For more information: www.entanglements.com.au



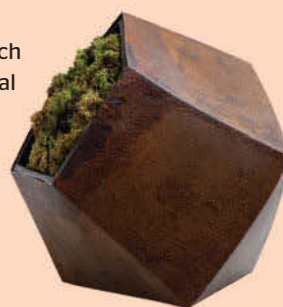
For art's sake

A well-chosen metal sculpture not only adds a focal point to a garden, it gives it a dash of artistic flair that reflects your personality. Overwrought specialises in metalwork design and is especially well known for its garden sculpture. Made in Daylesford, near Melbourne, all works are handcrafted and display the highest levels of workmanship. The range of designs is diverse and includes many works of modern style, such as Abstract 19, pictured here. It is made of mild steel and stands 1200mm high. For more information: www.overwrought.com.au



Divine design

Available in four complementary sizes, the Boulder planter from Hive adds a contemporary yet rustic touch to any garden, deck or outdoor living area. Each metal planter has a distinctive polygonal shape that is sculptural in form and the collection comes in an antique-style faux oxidised finish. The waterproof internal bowls are available in black, blue and white. Boulder planters look good on their own or in a group. For more information: www.kezu.com.au



By lantern light

The Lantern from EcoSmart Fire is both a source of heat and a work of art. Each side features an intricate cut-out pattern which casts interesting shadows when the fireplace is switched on. The Lantern is made out of long-lasting Corten steel and is fuelled using clean-burning bioethanol, which is a liquid fuel made from agricultural byproducts. This stylish and eco-friendly fireplace, which stands 590mm high, is suitable for both outdoor and indoor use. For more information: www.ecosmartfire.com.au



Take a letter

Entanglements' letterboxes offer something different. Designs come in a range of finishes, including durable rustic metal, and all can be personalised with laser-cut numbers. The Numbered letterbox, pictured here, has letter and newspaper slots, stands 900mm high and comes in a natural rust finish. In terms of installation, you have a choice of reo bar spikes or flat base. Custom sizes and colours are available. For more information: www.entanglements.com.au



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Design Source ›



Dream to reality

With a skilled design and construction team, you can have your dream garden

A well-designed and expertly built garden is an asset to any home. While we all have our own ideas about what makes the ideal outdoor space, most people don't have the design, construction or horticultural expertise to take those ideas and adapt them to meet their specific site, lifestyle and budgetary needs. To maximise your investment and ensure





the best possible result, you need the help of an experienced landscape design and construction company.

Anthony Spies Landscapes offers the complete suite of design and construction services. Says company owner Anthony Spies, "We have been designing and building gardens for 43 years and across two generations. As a landscape designer, I am trained to work in a variety of styles and have the experience to offer design solutions that you might not otherwise have considered.

"I can also help to focus your attention on the practical realities so that everything is properly planned from the outset and no expensive mistakes are made. Even if you have fantastic ideas of your own, a good designer will help you to refine them and show you how you can turn your dream garden into a reality."

Anthony Spies Landscapes does not follow trends. Rather, Anthony and his team are dedicated to creating gardens tailor-made to suit each situation. Longevity, adaptability and ease of maintenance are also priorities. "We design and implement gardens that last for generations, adapt as the family grows and continue to provide desirable, aesthetically pleasing environments which are both manageable and functional," says Anthony.

Anthony Spies Landscapes has experience in all aspects of construction, ranging from excavation and site work to structural concrete

work (engineered walls and decks, footings and piers) and stone work (walling and paving). The construction team also excels in the building of timber structures (pergolas, decks, cabanas and fences) as well as the installation of irrigation and lighting systems.

By combining its construction skills and design savvy with Anthony's formal training in horticulture and arboriculture, Anthony Spies Landscapes is able to develop and implement innovative solutions, no matter how tricky the project or challenging the problem.

"We design beautiful gardens and outdoor areas that require minimal maintenance and are accessible, functional and suitable for use by young and old," says Anthony. "One of the keys to our success is our approach to selection. Not only should the plants look stunning, they must be suited to their location within the garden and fit for purpose. This ensures the future integrity of the garden is not compromised." ■

For more information

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Reap the rewards

A new garden is a significant lifestyle investment so it pays to get it right

How to go about creating a new outdoor space? Transforming your outdoor space is a significant investment; when done right, it's a great improvement to both your property value and your lifestyle so it's best to get professional advice to make sure you get it right from the start.

Professional landscape designers are a great resource to explore the potential of your outdoor spaces, how to transform them, how to get the best value and, most importantly, the best result. They are trained in all of the facets

of a good design so when you find the right fit, you know you're in good hands.

Georgia Harper Landscape Design (GHLD) is a landscape design practice dedicated to working in collaboration with clients to achieve the most effective, engaging and lovely landscapes to live in. "We aim to work with each client to create an outdoor space that will both enhance their home and contribute to their lifestyle," says Georgia Harper.

"Our philosophy is that good design is a great investment. A well-designed landscape





always boosts the value of a property, as well as the quality of life the family will enjoy with a design that's customised just for them. Use of the right materials makes sure that any structures will suit the style of garden and home and enhance the aesthetic appeal, and careful plant selection ensures that each garden will thrive in the conditions specific to that site."

Proper planning means you know what you will be getting right from the start and how it will work, which helps streamline the construction process. "Some projects are more complex than others, and for this reason we work with the parameters set by each client. Some will choose to use a contractor to complete the works, some would like to schedule the works over time, and some like to DIY. We ensure that each client has the right tools to achieve their dream garden," continues Georgia.

With projects ranging from small residential courtyards to large commercial developments throughout Melbourne and Victoria, GHLD works with clients to achieve outstanding and unique results. GHLD is experienced in a wide range of garden styles, from formal to modern, small jobs or garden renovations to large-scale landscaping projects.

"We're here to help clients through the design process so everyone is completely clear on each aspect of their design *before* the first day of construction. It costs the same to get a bad result as it does to get a good result so we're there to make sure it's right the first time, says Georgia." ■



For more information

Georgia Harper Landscape Design

PO Box 362, Clifton Hill Vic 3068

Mobile 0412 293 247

Email info@ghld.com.au

Website www.ghld.com.au



Go for green

Now you can have hedges and green walls that look pristine year round

Artificial hedges provide instant privacy and beauty, and they save you money and time as zero maintenance is required. That means no watering, no feeding, no pruning and, of course, no dead plants.

Designer Plants specialises in exquisite faux hedges supplied as individual panels that can be cut to shape and attached to any stable exterior surface. Just imagine

a hedge that looks immaculate all year round but never needs trimming or a green wall that is always lush and leafy but never needs clipping. If you're looking for an instant effect or a no-maintenance way to add greenery to your garden, Designer Plants has the solution.

According to company owner David Eden: "Our panels are made to authentically copy nature so they blend seamlessly into

the existing landscape. The results are immediate, guaranteed and stunningly real."

For your convenience, Designer Plants offers pre-built hedges for use in courtyards, entertaining areas, patios and balconies. Or, if you prefer, the company can custom-make free-standing hedge walls, either mobile or static. Designer Plants' custom creations extend to planters built or clad in the material



of your choice, with options ranging from timber-clad planters to wrought-iron pots. You also have a wide choice of panel styles, including Photinia, Ivy, Laurel, Cypress and Boxwood, along with artificial grass that can be used on vertical surfaces.

Designer Plants' faux plant panels, which are covered by a full five-year manufacturer's warranty, are UV-treated and resistant to rain and frost, making them ideal for all climatic conditions. The other advantage is you don't

need a professional installer. You can do it yourself or just call your local handyman.

"We pride ourselves on the depth of our product knowledge and work closely with our clients to ensure all options and issues are explored, from lighting to council regulations," says David.

"We give clients the garden they have always dreamed of, at a fraction of the price, in just a few hours. They never have to spend another back-breaking weekend of maintenance. So save your sanity and be the envy of family and friends with a garden that looks immaculate 365 days a year." ■

For more information

Designer Plants

Phone 1800 617 341

Mobile 0422 478 982

Email sales@designerplants.com.au

Website www.designerplants.com.au



Leading the way

Choose the right equipment and you can totally transform your swimming pool

A swimming pool is no longer just a place to cool down in summer and keep the kids entertained on the weekend. Pools are now a social hub, a design focal point and a means of boosting the value of your home.

Today we expect a lot from our swimming pools. They need to look good, cater for every family member and be easy to maintain. AstralPool Australia covers all of these bases, providing a wide range of products to make your swimming pool as efficient to run and appealing to use as possible. These products include filtration pumps, filters and chlorinators, along with various methods of heating, cleaning and lighting. AstralPool now also supplies play equipment such as diving boards, slides and basketball hoops.

The leader in energy, water and chemical efficiency, AstralPool can provide you with the

best-quality water at the lowest possible cost, both in terms of time and resources. To ensure you get the best performance from your pool, AstralPool has the Viron P320 eVo pump, which is the market forerunner in energy efficiency.

The latest trend in pool ownership is the automation of swimming pool equipment, either via a touchscreen or by using smartphones and other devices. AstralPool's Viron Connect 10 allows for full control and monitoring of pool equipment, and to give you the same control no matter where you are, you just need to download an app.

With the AstralPool range of water features, lighting, controllers and heating, you can make better use of your pool. The latter is especially important as heating extends the amount of time your pool can be used. You wouldn't spend good money on a new car just to have it garaged for

six months of the year, so why would you forgo heating, which enables year-round use of your swimming pool?

To find out more about the AstralPool product range and how it can benefit your pool experience, ask your pool builder or pool retailer. You can also check out the AstralPool Australia website, which is continually updated with new products and ideas, or you can like the Facebook page (www.facebook.com.au/astralpoolau) to get the latest information on products and competitions. ■

For more information

AstralPool Australia

Email marketing@astralpool.com.au

Website www.astralpool.com.au

Facebook www.facebook.com.au/astralpoolau

Alfords Point
outdoor kitchen.

Lifestyle choice

Add some sizzle to your entertaining with this stylish range of Australian-made barbecues

With an Australian-made barbecue or outdoor kitchen from Lifestyle BBQs, you'll get all the heat control and cooking performance you need. This means you'll be able to cook something as delicate as a pancake on low heat on the stainless-steel hotplate for a leisurely family breakfast, and then crank it up to high at night to cook marinated prawns in a minute or two. If a thick cut of Porterhouse steak is on the menu, turn the heat down low under the grill and close the roasting hood for a restaurant-quality result.

The Lifestyle BBQs modular outdoor kitchen range, which is aimed at the avid entertainer, is one of the company's best sellers. Of sleek, contemporary design and featuring either a gas or charcoal barbecue made from commercial-grade stainless steel, a Lifestyle BBQs' outdoor kitchen is a beautiful addition to any home. More importantly, it is durable, functional and good value for money, which is exactly what the modern Australian family is looking for.

In addition to the outdoor kitchens, Lifestyle BBQs has an extensive range of built-in and free-standing barbecues. All products are made using 304-grade stainless steel and the electro-polished stainless-steel plates and grills ensure a professional result when

barbecuing, making burnt snags and chops a thing of the past.

Lifestyle BBQs' products can be purchased direct from the manufacturer and shipped Australia-wide and, for the right advice on the best barbecue or outdoor kitchen to suit your needs, you can feel free to call Lifestyle BBQs and speak to an expert. You can also peruse the website and view videos of an experienced chef cooking up a storm on Lifestyle BBQs' top-quality outdoor kitchens and barbecues.

So why not enjoy the experience of cooking on a world-class barbecue and, at the same time, bring together family and friends to enjoy a barbecued meal that has been cooked to perfection. ■

Greenhills Beach
outdoor kitchen.Greenhills Beach
outdoor kitchen.

For more information

Lifestyle BBQs

113A Fairford Road, Padstow NSW 2211

Phone (02) 9773 6245 (Sydney)

Toll Free 1300 849 790 (country and interstate)

Email sales@lifestylebbqs.com

Website www.lifestylebbqs.com



One of a kind

A creative blend of natural and man-made elements results in a unique backyard

Recreating the feel of the surrounding Brisbane bushland was only one part of the brief for this stunning pool.

It also needed a strong sense of style that would endure even in the full Australian sun. The result is nothing less than spectacular. Despite the first builder quitting mid-project, the owner was determined to have a pool with a sense of bushland style that couldn't be matched. To finish the project, Jim from



Cutting Edge Designs was brought in to provide a feature that would set the pool apart from the ordinary, without destroying the natural feel of the project.

The need for a durable outdoor material that could both provide an outstanding feature and remain grounded in the natural environment required a unique material. The solution was Knotwood's powder-coated aluminium.



The use of Knotwood's expansive range of timber colours keeps the fence grounded, while still being exquisitely eye-catching. A dark timber colour was selected to match the existing timber decking, while lighter timber colours were chosen to complement the light stone and pool tiling. A red timber was

chosen to match the brickwork of the house, and the four powder-coated colours now complement the roof, portico and guttering.

The avant-garde colour selection not only provides a unique focal point for the outdoor area, but also perfectly ties the otherwise disparate elements together, like golden thread through tapestry.

This sort of variance would never be possible with timber. The full-sun exposure would cause each timber to behave differently and the fence would quickly fall into disrepair. Knotwood is immune to this as all the materials are made from high-quality, marine-grade Australian aluminium and finished with a high-quality, Australian powder-coat. This means the colours don't fade or flake in the hot sun, eliminating the need for time-consuming maintenance.

Knotwood provides a full range of aluminium systems, from decking and shutters to fencing and balustrades, all of which are backed by a 15-year manufacturer's warranty. This high level of quality can only be achieved by using the rigorous manufacturing process Knotwood has perfected during its 50-plus-years combined experience in the powder-coating industry.

This project goes to show that when a great product meets a creative mind, imagination can become reality. ■

For more information

Knotwood

Phone 1300 KNOTWOOD

Email sales@knotwood.com.au

Website www.knotwood.com





Design diversity

Quality concrete paving, coping and walling for both classic and contemporary gardens

The modern Australian family spends a lot of time by the pool or in the garden so it makes sense to choose paving and walling products that can stand up to the wear and tear of daily use. Good looks are, of course, important but durability, strength and ease of maintenance are essential.

Ticking all the right boxes, Customstone SA produces a high-quality range of contemporary concrete paving and coping products with complementary walling. Each product is hard-

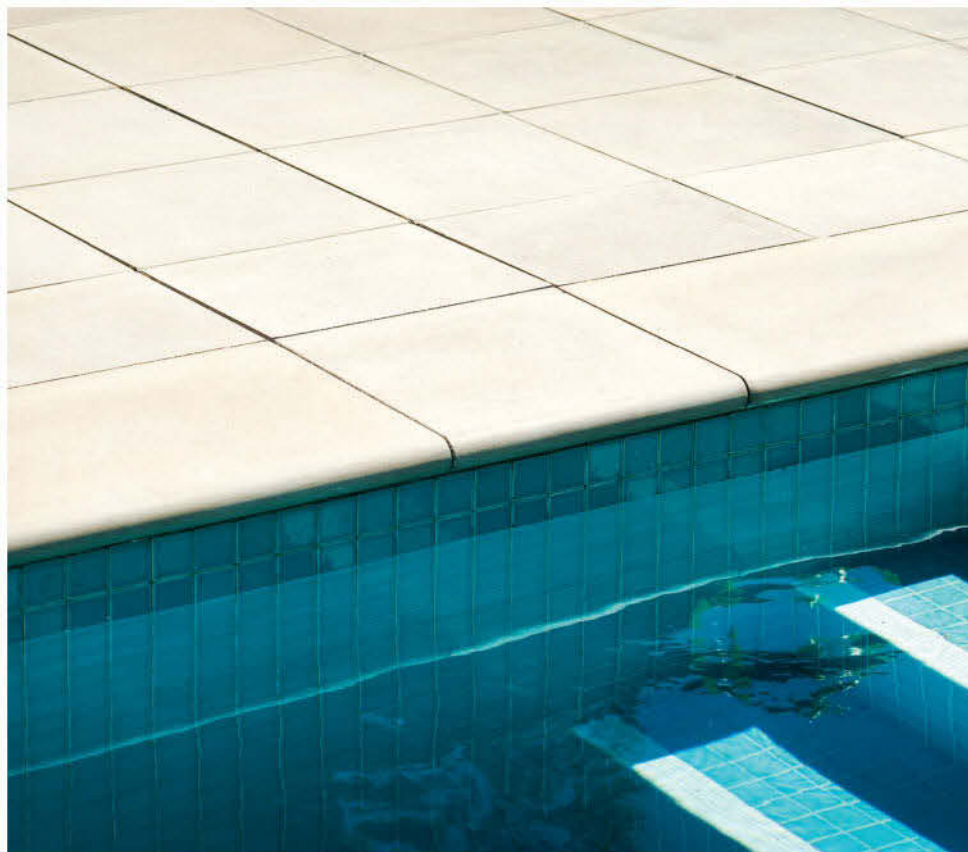
wearing, of consistent size, thickness and finish, and comes in a variety of colours and finishes.

For safety in the garden or around pools, spas and water features, the pavers have slip-resistant surfaces. If you live in a coastal area or have a saltwater pool, you can take comfort in knowing that the pavers are salt-resistant too.

For design flexibility, Customstone SA's large-format pavers are available in five sizes (400mm × 400mm, 450mm × 450mm, 500mm × 500mm, 600mm × 300mm and 600mm × 600mm). These

can be teamed with the driveway pavers (300mm × 300mm and 400mm × 400mm), coping (400mm × 400mm, 500mm × 500mm, 500mm × 350mm with corners to match) and the mortared walling (500mm × 250mm × 200mm). Straight pool coping (800mm × 400mm) and some radius coping are also available.

By using Customstone SA's large-format pavers, you can make a small outdoor space appear larger. This is because of the reduced number of join lines, which ensures an uncluttered look.



Replacing sections of lawn with easy-care paving can also help reduce your water use and time spent on garden maintenance.

Whether you're planning a contemporary or classic outdoor project, there are many colours and finishes to choose from so you can be assured of finding something of a complementary tone and texture. For paving and coping, various custom and honed finishes (where the aggregate shows through) are available. While the exposed-aggregate finishes are particularly popular at the moment, the smoother finishes are still in demand.

To ensure a fully coordinated look throughout your outdoor areas, most Customstone SA products, which are all made to order, are available in the company's complete range of colours and finishes. ■

For more information

Customstone SA

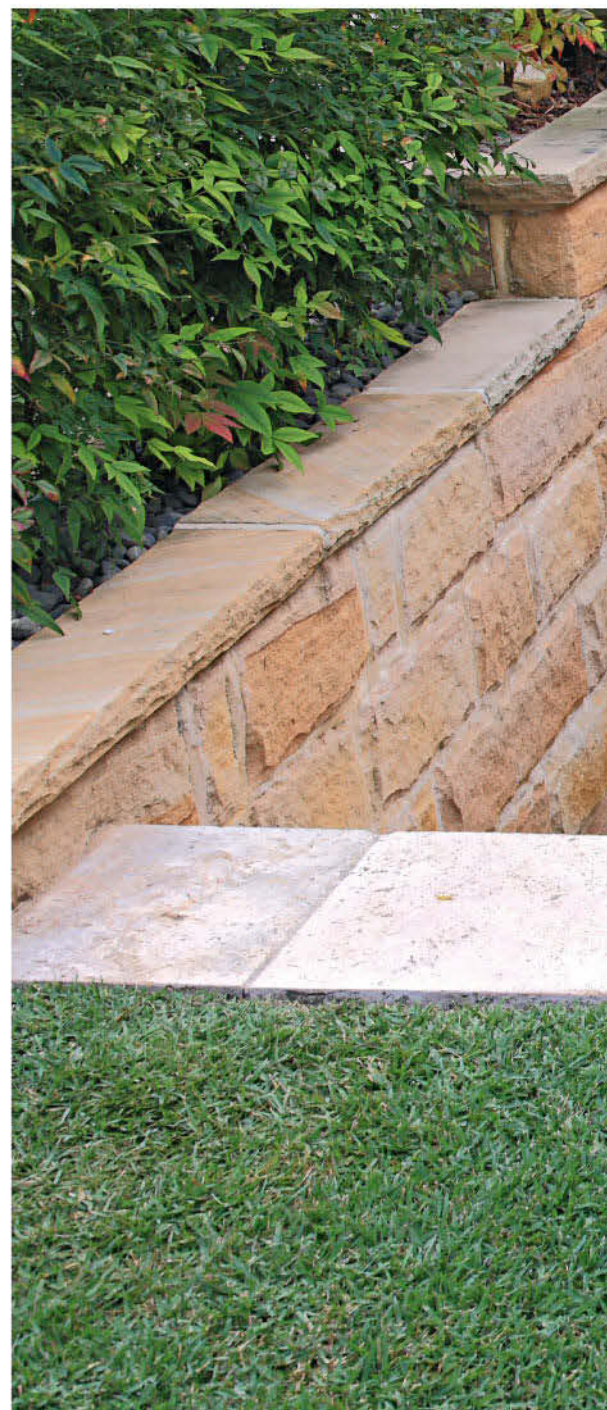
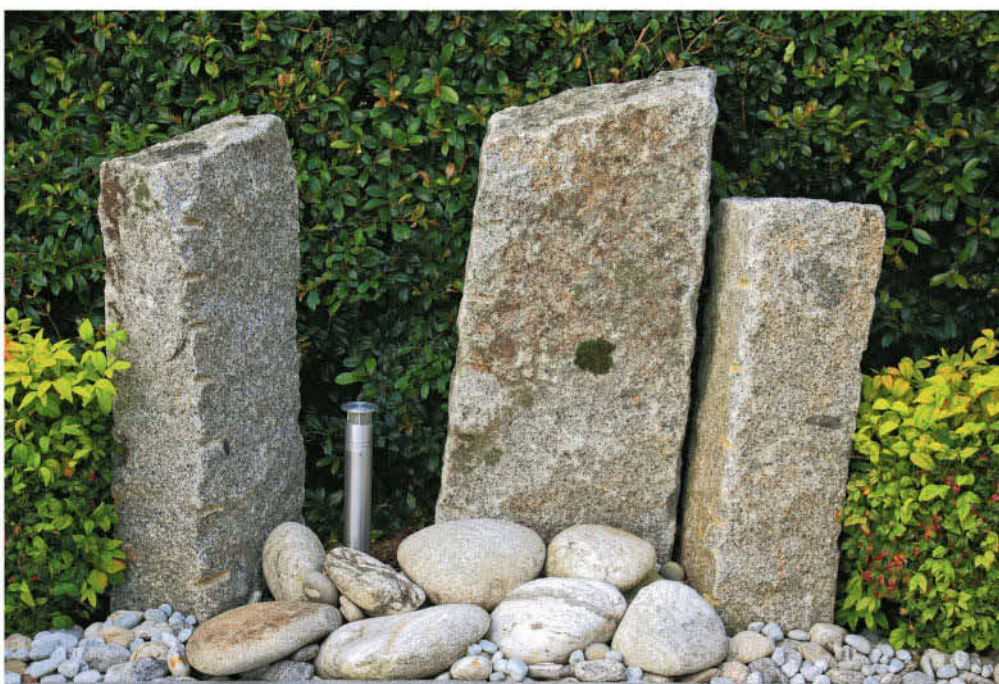
1-3 Bayer Road, Elizabeth South SA 5112

Phone (08) 8252 9633

Email info@customstonesa.com.au

Website www.customstonesa.com.au





Complete package

Everything you need to complete your next garden project is in the one handy location

Whether you're in need of supplies for a small garden project or a major garden overhaul, Menai Sand & Soil is the place to visit. This landscape and building supply yard is set on two acres in Lucas Heights, south-west of Sydney, and has more than 60 bins of bulk product, including a great variety of garden mulches, soils and sands that are always in stock.

On average, Menai Sand & Soil sells more than 1000 tonnes of bulk products each week so you can be assured they have your delivery needs covered. You can either have delivery arranged, using one of their trucks which can transport

three to 30 tonnes, or you can have your trailer or truck loaded by one of the company's three on-site loading machines.

Menai Sand & Soil not only carries all your general landscape and building supplies, it also specialises in the supply of pebbles. This includes a fully imported range of polished pebbles as well as their exclusive Super Grey pebble. This pure-grey pebble has proven to be a very popular product, complementing modern home and garden designs. In all, Menai Sand & Soil stocks more than 20 types of pebbles, in different colours and sizes, ensuring you will be

able to find a product to suit your needs.

When you visit the supply yard, don't forget to peruse the company's display of pavers as well as its granite pillars, large feature rocks and broad array of sandstone products. Menai Sand & Soil also has a wide range of retaining wall products, which includes Adbri retainers, besser blocks, dry-pressed bricks, sandstone dimensional blocks and treated pine sleepers, and they stock gabion cages along with a choice of sandstone and bluestone rock that can be used as fill.

Although the emphasis is on landscape materials, Menai Sand & Soil offers a range of hand-carved statues that make excellent garden features. And if you need a new pot for your yard, the company's range is extensive and ever-growing so it is easy to match your decor to your new paving or walling.

No matter what your needs (whether it's help



with drainage, turfing or paving), experienced staff members are always on hand to provide expert advice and assistance.

So whether you're simply contemplating your next outdoor project or you're ready to make a start, Menai Sand & Soil will supply the products to take you from start to finish. ■

For more information

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Phone (02) 9543 5333

Email sales@menaisandsoil.com.au

Website www.menaisandsoil.com.au



Natural appeal

Reconstituted limestone products offer endless versatility, strength and beauty

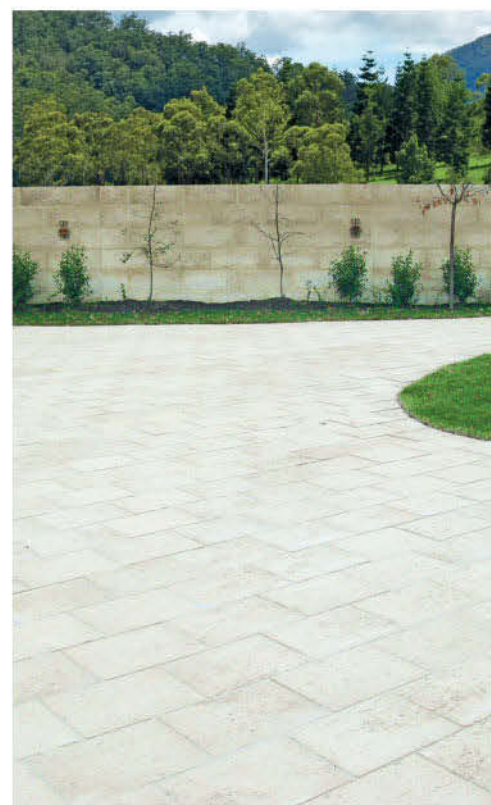
There is no denying the timeless appeal of natural limestone, but what if you could have the beauty and texture of limestone combined with the strength of concrete? Jaffa Limestone specialises in the production of reconstituted limestone blocks, bricks and pavers. Made from crushed limestone and cement, these products are denser and stronger than quarry-cut limestone, yet have the look and feel of natural limestone.

Jaffa Limestone products have an earthy quality, an appealing texture and a lovely natural colour that will enhance any home or landscape design. The stone is sourced from limestone outcrops located at Cape Jaffa in the south-east of South Australia, after which it is crushed and mixed with cement to make a product that is durable, strong and versatile.

Products range from square-edge wall blocks that can be used to build solid stand-alone privacy walls or retaining walls to solid pavers that are ideal for driveways and paths as well as roadways and public thoroughfares. Jaffa Limestone also produces building stone that suits a wide range of house designs and recently introduced a hollow core block. This is a lightweight alternative that still has the unique limestone characteristics of the rest of the range.

All products are tested to ensure compliance with the relevant Australian Standards relating to strength, durability and slip resistance, so you can be assured of quality and longevity. You can also rest assured that expert advice is on hand as Jaffa Limestone's staff has experience in the construction of everything from retaining walls to residential and commercial buildings.

Jaffa Limestone has a number of agencies around South Australia and Victoria and can deliver anywhere in Australia. For more details, visit the website where you can also download a product catalogue as well as construction and design guides. There is also a gallery of completed projects to get you inspired. ■



For more information

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Website www.jaffalimestone.com.au



Stylish sandstone

Honed white sandstone ... it's the perfect choice for all your landscaping needs

Sandstone is one of the most popular choices for landscaping and home building, and that is for very good reason. It is stone that complements any style of garden or home design and it is a stone that comes in a wide choice of colours. In the case of the garden showcased here, the owners wanted a clean look for their new seaside property and they felt Cinajus Mint White honed sandstone was the perfect choice.

Mint White honed sandstone has been used extensively throughout the landscape, from the front path, stairs, entry, balconies and patios to the coping around the swimming pool.

Mint White honed sandstone is a firm favourite with landscape designers and architects who prize its neutral tones and subtle colour variation. It is also very popular with the landscape contractors and the tiling trade because of the products' consistent sizing and thickness. Homeowners love it because it is non-slip, cool and soft to walk on and requires minimal maintenance.

Cinajus can provide Mint White sandstone cut in a 600mm x 400mm format, in square edge and bullnose coping, stair treads as well as pavers. A range of finishes is available, including sandblasted and natural, and if you need to build a garden feature wall, Mint White sandstone is also available in rock-faced walling blocks.



Since they opened their doors in 1999, Cinajus has specialised in providing beautiful natural stone products for all classes of residential and commercial projects. During that time, Cinajus has consistently been at the leading edge of natural stone suppliers due to its dynamic product range and depth of knowledge in stone selection.

At Cinajus you will find a highly skilled and knowledgeable team dedicated to offering honest advice on a broad range of quality stone products, which includes sandstone, granite, travertine, limestone and marble. Cinajus is



based in Sydney, however it also has extensive experience supplying projects Australia wide. ■

For more information

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Email info@cinajus.com

Website www.cinajus.com



Wonder walls

For a modern look, choose architectural rock gabion feature and retaining walls

Gabion walls are fast becoming a must-have design element in home gardens. Whether used as a retaining wall, a feature wall or as a decorative element, gabions suit a diverse range of garden styles.

Gabion specialist Permathene recently released a new gabion product based on higher standards for welded-mesh gabion. The product, which is manufactured in Australia, is called Galfan Plus and it is made from steel with a 10 per cent aluminium and a 90 per cent zinc coating of 280g per square metre.

This coating offers an estimated lifespan twice that of Permathene's previous-standard Galfan, which has a five per cent aluminium and 95 per cent zinc coating. In a typical urban environment with low salt and moderate pollutants, the expected life of the new wire is estimated to be 90 years (compared to only 20 years for standard

galvanised mesh). The new gabion product supersedes the old Galfan (aluminium five per cent, zinc 95 per cent).

Permathene now also stocks standard stainless-steel products (marine-grade 316). Ex-stock in 50mm x 50mm aperture (mesh opening size) is available in a full range of cage sizes together with stainless-steel spirals, U clips (if preferred) and stiffeners (reinforcing wire). For commercial customers, ex-stock stainless-steel C rings are also available.

To build the Permathene gabions there are three connection methods: The spiral, which is the strongest connection and also gives protection against the sharp edges of the welded panels; the C ring, which is used by most landscapers as a quick, economical and tidy way to build gabions; and, now, a new method called the U clip. This is a neat way to join the panels together because the clip





is hardly noticeable and connects the panels together tightly without any gaps.

Permathene C rings, U Clips and tools are all manufactured by Meihotech of Japan, one of the highest-quality manufacturers of this type of product in the world.

One of the best things about gabions is that you do not need to use expensive rock, especially in the middle of the cages. You can use recycled brick, concrete and other materials, with only the facing rocks being hand-placed. Try to prevent any voids by placing the rocks like a jigsaw puzzle, which is a bit of work but well worth the effort. Also, gabions look best when the rocks are flat against the panels, without protruding through the aperture. ■

For more information

Permathene Pty Ltd

Phone 1800 608 095 (free call)

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